Erap having hard time finding lawyers

Story on Page A7

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- **Payatas 'war' claims 10 lives** METRO / A25
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2001 ★ 76 PAGES 6 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 59 P15

Correction

The drophead of the banner headline, "Erap's final hours told," of the Feb. 4, 2001 issue should have read: At 1:20 p.m., **Jan. 19,** Estrada says, "This is serious, Reyes has defected."

Lawyers push for arrest of Erap

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL, CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA AND CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

PRIVATE prosecutors are urging the Office of the Ombudsman to file with the Sandiganbayan a case of plunder against ousted President Joseph Estrada so that he can be placed behind bars within 30 days.

"He (Ombudsman Aniano Desierto) can, based on the evidence already presented, decide to file a case of plunder that is non-bailable," lawyer Romeo Capulong said. "He needs only probable cause for the filing of the case."

Once the case is filed, the Sandiganbayan can issue a warrant of arrest and put the former President in jail, according to Capulong.

He said the Ombudsman should act expeditiously as the "whole world" was watching how the country's justice system would handle the case.

"How can we prove that our judicial system can respond effectively against a Chief Executive who has committed a heinous crime? This is a test case for our judicial system," Capulong said.

"Our system has been criticized for being impotent as it is being influenced by the money and power of influential people," he said.

Estrada faces seven cases before the Office of the Ombudsman, ranging from graft and corruption to plunder.

Last week, the Department of Justice announced its plan to file three more cases of plunder, which is punishable by death if the amount involved more than P50 million.

On Friday, former first lady Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada and six others were named respondents in a supplemental complaint filed with the Ombudsman in connection with

LAWYERS/ A20

ERAP'S FINAL HOURS

During talks, 2 sides acted in bad faith

THE END IS NEAR: Outgoing President Joseph Estrada and First Lady Luisita "Loi" Ejercito receive Cabinet members and supporters, (from left) Ludy Petronio, Bienvenido Laguesma, Mario Tiaoqui, Alberto Romualdez, Gregorio Vigilar and Edgardo Angara. THE ANGARA FILES

BY EDGARDO ANGARA

(Second of three parts)

Editor's note: This is the continuation of "The Final Days of Joseph Ejercito Estrada," a narrative from the diary of former Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara. It is an insider's account of Estrada's last two days in office, during which a defeated president tells the author, "I am very tired. I don't want any more of this—it's too painful."

Friday, Jan. 19, 2001

11 p.m.—Rene de Villa, one of the opposition's emissaries and now Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's executive secretary, calls to ask that we meet in negotiation.

I receive a call from former President Fidel V. Ramos.

"Ed," Ramos says, "*magtulungan tayo para magkaroon tayo ng* (Let's cooperate to ensure a) peaceful and orderly transfer of power. It is important that there will be no violence."

I answer: "Of course, Mr. President, it is also in our interest that no violence will break out."

We set the first round of negotiations in the Office of the Executive Secretary at Malacañang's Mabini Hall. Political adviser Lito Banayo, Assistant Secretary Boying Remulla of the Presidential Management Group, my aide Dondon Bagatsing and PMS head Macel Fernandez are with me.

Saturday, Jan. 20

12:20 a.m.—Rene de Villa arrives at Mabini Hall, accompanied by now Finance Secretary Alberto "Bert" Romulo and now Justice Secretary Hernando "Nani" Perez. The first round of negotiations begins.

Rene gives me a draft resignation letter for the President, with the demand that the letter be signed and the President leave the Palace by 6 a.m.

"Otherwise," he tells me, "we cannot control the hotheads in our group. *Lulusubin nila ang Malacañang* (They will attack Malacañang)."

I answer that Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should

DURING/ A6

Angara mixed up events–Maganto

MAGANTO

BY PHILIP C. TUBEZA

FORMER Executive Secretary Edgardo Angara got his facts wrong, Chief Supt. Romeo Maganto, chief of the interior department's Task Force Katapat, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Reacting to Angara's narrative of ousted President Joseph Estrada's final days in Malacañang, published in a three-part series in the INQUIRER starting yesterday, Maganto said Angara mixed up the dates in his recollection of what happened on Jan. 19 and 20.

"Angara mixed up the events that happened on Saturday with what occurred the day before," he said.

In his version of what transpired at the Palace on Friday, Jan. 19, the day the military defected to the opposition and the Estrada administration collapsed, Angara said Maganto had "reportedly allowed protesters in Mendiola to get closer to the Palace gates."

The police officer, a close ally of Lim's during and following the People Power Revolt of 1986, was one of the security officials to withdraw his support for Estrada and join hundreds

ANGARA/ A6

Chavit still a villain to some people in Ilocos Sur

BY LEONCIO BALBIN JR.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

VIGAN, Ilocos Sur—Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson may have been a hero to many at Edsa, but not to some people in his own home province.

The Save Ilocos Sur Alliance (Sisa), a loose organization of professional and religious groups, and the local chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines are pushing for an investigation of Singson's alleged involvement in the diversion of P130 million in tobacco taxes and "jueteng" operations in the province.

"We are now starting anew in rebuilding our nation. We are afraid, however, that Ilocos Sur will again be left behind, and continue to be gripped by the culture of fear and silence," Sisa said in a letter to Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

"While the nation is celebrating its newfound freedom from a corrupt government, which is a product of Edsa II, Ilocos Sur is agonizing because it has installed a similarly corrupt *trapo* (traditional politician) into a more prominent pedestal, that is as hero of Edsa," the multisectoral alliance added.

The Ilocos Sur chapter of the IBP also appealed to the new Macapagal administration to order a speedy investigation of the charges.

"The battle cry of Singson in his exposé, 'The truth shall set us free,' contains only half of the truth, the truth in his favor. To acclaim him as a hero without rendering justice for the province of Ilocos Sur would be foisting injustice to the people of Ilocos Sur," the group said.

Singson is the acknowledged

CHAVIT/ A20

Dinky wants gov't to be closer to people

SOLIMAN: First time to work in government bureaucracy as social welfare secretary. JOAN BONDOC

BY CHRISTINE HERRERA

SHE DID not fall off her chair as expected when President Macapagal-Arroyo made public her decision to name her secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development without telling her first.

That's because she was standing victorious with hundreds of other protesters from the Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kompil II) and the militant Estrada Resign Movement at Mendiola near Malacañang.

With clenched fists raised, they were chanting "*Arestuhin si Erap, arestuhin si Erap*" (Arrest Erap), shortly after it was announced that deposed President Joseph Estrada had left Malacañang.

She may be the smallest in the Cabinet at 4 feet 10 inches, about an inch shorter than President Macapagal, but Corazon Juliano Soliman, known simply as Dinky, never had an inkling that she would be working in government.

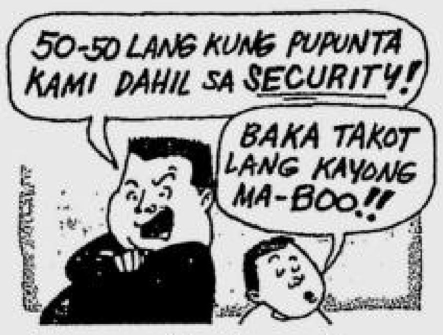
All she wanted was to bring the government closer to the people and People Power II proved that.

When Ms Macapagal announced that she was considering Soliman as DSWD head on Jan. 20, she said the political activist would definitely fall off her chair.

Soliman devoted close to three decades of her life to civil society activities right after graduating from the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, in 1973, even before the word "non-government organization" was introduced to the vocabulary of government.

At first, she could not imagine giving up her ethnic wardrobe,

DINKY/ A20



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Estrada brothers cool to PMA event

BY CARLITO PABLO

WHAT a difference a year, or less, makes.

Only in February 2000 did the brothers Estrada—Jinggoy, Joseph Victor (JV) and Jude—march proudly beside their adoptive classmates at the annual alumni homecoming of the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City.

This year, the brothers are reportedly not *gung-ho* about joining their "mistahs" at the homecoming on Feb. 17.

ESTRADA/ A21

Women witnesses leave safehouse; threat not over

BY STELLA O. GONZALES

AFTER spending almost two months in a safehouse, Emma Lim and Menchu Itchon, prosecution witnesses in the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada before he was ousted, were finally able to go back to their homes last week.

But the threat to their lives is not over because they will most likely be called as witnesses again, this time in the criminal cases filed against Estrada with the Office of the Ombudsman.

Arrangements are being made for their turnover to the government's witness protection program. Until then, they will continue to be protected by the group of security men hired last December by the House prosecution team.

It was this security team that protected Lim, Itchon and members of the prosecution panel.

The team members are unarmed and number less than a dozen. They look harmless, but one look in their eyes and you know that they mean business—that they will die for the witnesses, no ifs or buts.

WOMEN/ A20

Second FRONT PAGE

KAYA PALA
'DI UMUSAD
ANG IMBES-
TIGASYON,
EH !

'Erap men blocked Dacer probe'

Gloria says NBI 'has found out many attempts to stonewall the investigation'

DACER

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has accused the Estrada administration of attempting to "stonewall" the investigation into the disappearance of Salvador "Bubby" Dacer.

Speaking to reporters after a mass for Dacer at the St. Jude Parish on Saturday, Ms Macapagal said the "National Bureau of Investigation has found out that there were many attempts to stonewall... and not proceed with the investigation."

The President said the Estrada government should have formed a special task for the Dacer case.

She vowed that it would be the new administration's "special commitment" to "find alive" as soon as possible the missing public relations man and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said authorities are looking into the possibility that the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force may have been behind Dacer's abduction.

"We're pursuing a lot of angles, including the PAOCTF angle. We have a good lead but we can't reveal it at this point," Wycoco told reporters after the mass.

"We assure the President that we're doing everything to solve the case," he said.

Former President Fidel Ramos said authorities should speed up investigation, warning that those behind Dacer's abduction might have left the country already.

"There has to be quick coordination, action and even networking. I'm afraid the suspects have already gone out of the country," Ramos told the INQUIRER after the Mass.

Dacer's daughter, Ampy Henson, said it is only Ramos who bothers to give her family any information about her father's case.

But the former president said he only gets his updates from "scattered authorities" as there has yet to be a coordinated investigation.

Authorities have yet to invite for questioning anyone who could be behind the abduction.

Last December, an NBI source said Malacañang had imposed a news blackout on all NBI officers involved in the Dacer investigation following a meeting at the Palace called by the National Intelligence and Coordinating Agency.

At that meeting, the NBI was tapped to head the composite team investigating the abduction.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the PAOCTF, the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the Intelligence Service of the AFP and the NBI.

In Malaybalay City, a text message alleging that Dacer's body has been found sent soldiers and policemen scurrying to a remote village here yesterday.

Supt. Eduardo Edgardo Villamayor, Bukidnon police chief, said his men and soldiers from the Army 403rd Infantry Brigade spent hours searching for the body in Barangay Casisang.

"It was unbelievable but we did not take any chances. Our men had combed the village and found nothing," Villamayor told the INQUIRER.

The Army and police even searched other areas in Bukidnon.

SPO2 Noel Salvacion, spokesperson of the Malaybalay PNP station, said they first heard about the text message at 9 a.m. yesterday. He said they received calls from Camp Crame and the commanding general of the Philippine Army inquiring about the veracity of the message.

Some radio stations in Manila also called to inquire about the case, he added.

At the time of his disappearance, Dacer was a high-profile publicist, specializing in crisis PR, for many prominent public figures, among them Ramos and Dante Tan, the owner of the controversial BW Resources Corp.

Press reports said he had met with deposed President Joseph Estrada the day before his disappearance.

Dacer and his driver went missing two months ago on their way to a meeting with Ramos at the Manila Hotel. Witnesses said the two being taken out of the publicist's car by five armed men at the corner of Zobel Roxas and the South Expressway on Nov. 24. *H.M. Mordeno and Froilan Gallardo, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Abus renew threat to behead Schilling

MORO rebels have renewed their threat to behead an American held for more than five months on Jolo Island, radio station dzRH reported in Manila said yesterday.

Rebel spokesman Abu Sabaya called the radio station to say the fundamentalist Abu Sayyaf guerrillas would carry out their threat to kill Jeffrey Schilling to disprove the military's claim that the American was a "walk-in" or willing hostage, dzRH said.

Sabaya did not say when the rebels would carry out their threat, it added.

Schilling, a convert to Islam, has been held by the Abu Sayyaf since late in August when he and his Muslim wife, who is a relative of one of the rebels, visited the guerrilla camp in Jolo.

Schilling's wife was later allowed to leave the camp.

The military has expressed suspicion that Schilling may have been a willing hostage because he had gone voluntarily to the rebel area but said government efforts are continuing to obtain his release.

The rebels, who are fighting for an independent Islamic state in the South, also threatened to behead Schilling in September after Manila rejected their demand for a ransom.

Schilling was among more than 40 foreign and Filipino hostages taken by the Abu Sayyaf from nearby Malaysian isles and Jolo last year.

The rebels have freed most of their hostages in exchange for ransom while some have escaped, leaving Schilling and a Filipino, Roland Ullah, still in their hands.

The US Embassy in Manila has said Schilling had gone to the Philippines to pursue his interest in Islam.

A local journalist who visited the Abu Sayyaf camp in September said the guerrillas took Schilling hostage after he angered them during a debate over religious issues.

At one point, Schilling was reported by Manila newspapers to have gone on a hunger strike to pressure the Abu Sayyaf into releasing him.

DzRH said Sabaya also told the radio station that the rebels would resume their kidnapping activities because of Manila's refusal to negotiate the release of Schilling and Ullah.

The Abu Sayyaf received millions of dollars in ransom for freeing its other hostages, including French, German, South African and Finnish nationals.

Reuters

Moro rebs attack village; 9 missing

MORO separatists have raided a remote village in Saranggani province, and nine people are missing, the military said yesterday.

Southern Command spokesman Col. Hilario Atendido said members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front swooped down on Nomoh village Saturday and fought with local tribesmen.

"Guerrillas attacked the village, strafing rows of thatched houses with automatic rifles," Atendido said.

The guerrillas launched the attack in revenge for the killing of a Muslim elder by B'laan tribesmen in the village, he said.

The MILF fighters torched a cluster of houses before retreating into the jungle, forcing villagers to flee, Atendido said.

"At least nine villagers were still missing," he said.

The MILF is the country's main Moro insurgent group and has waged a two-decade rebellion for an independent Islamic state in the south.

It has said it was open to resuming stalled peace negotiations with the new government of President Gloria Arroyo, who came to power last month after a military-backed popular revolt.

The guerrillas however have recently stepped up attacks in the South after their leaders were charged with murder in connection with a wave of bombings in Manila in December that killed 22 people.

AFP

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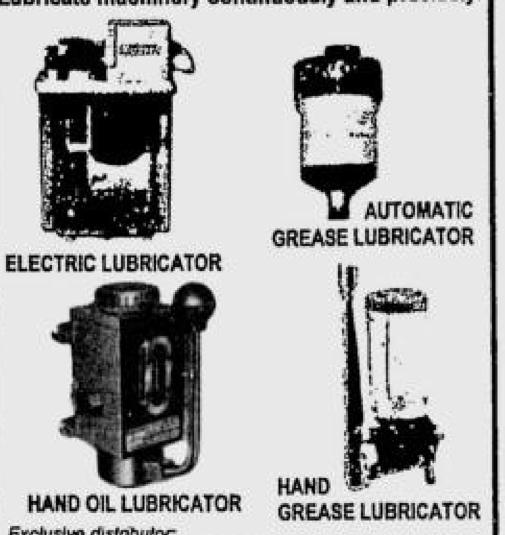

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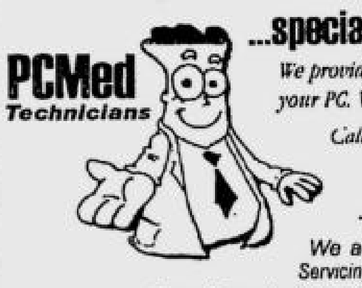

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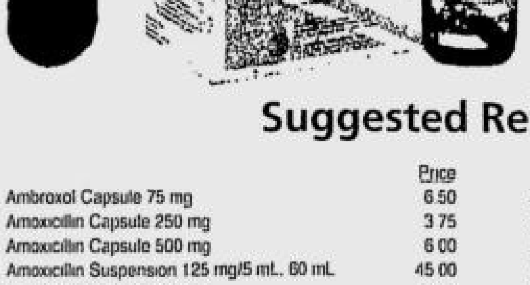

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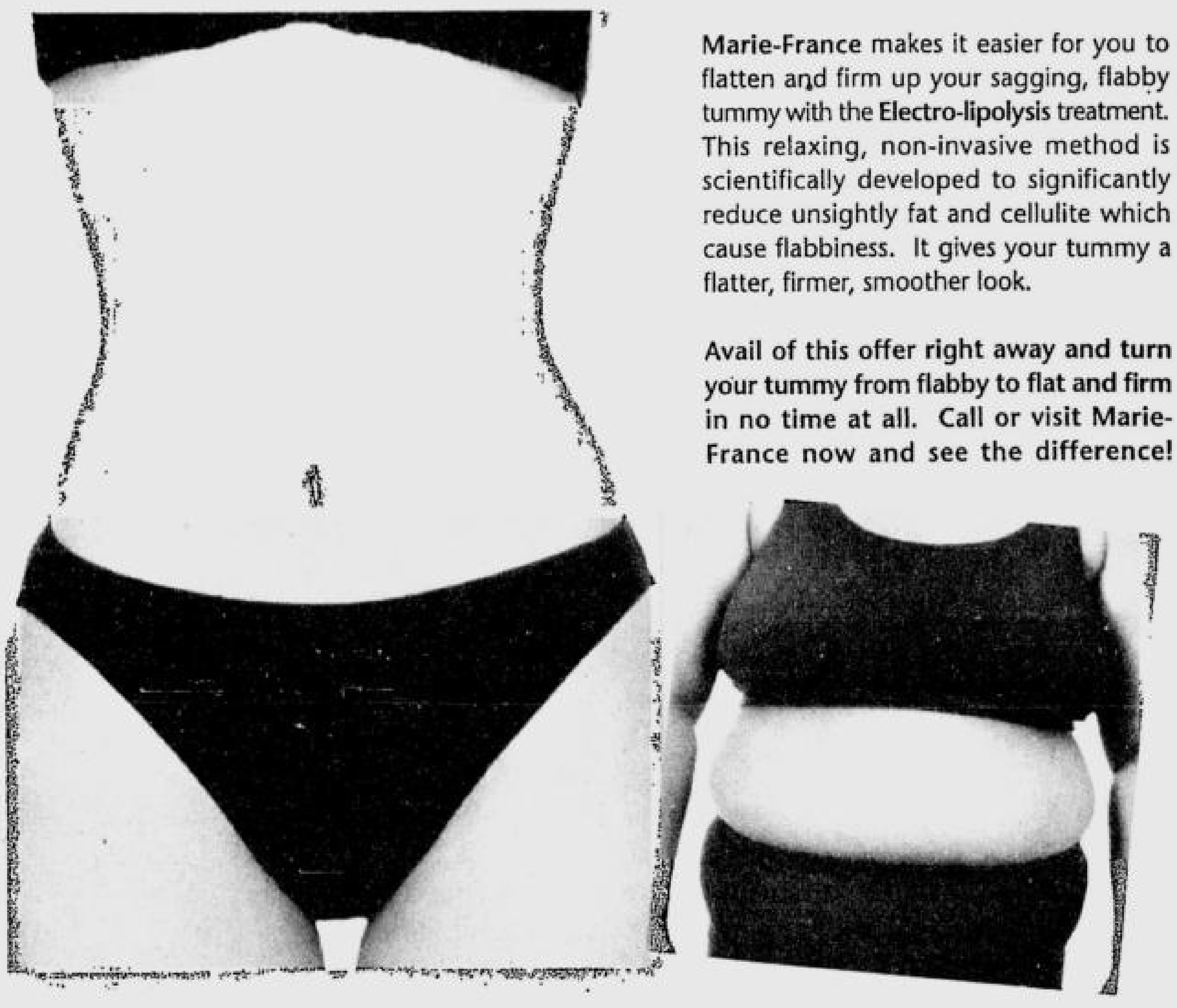

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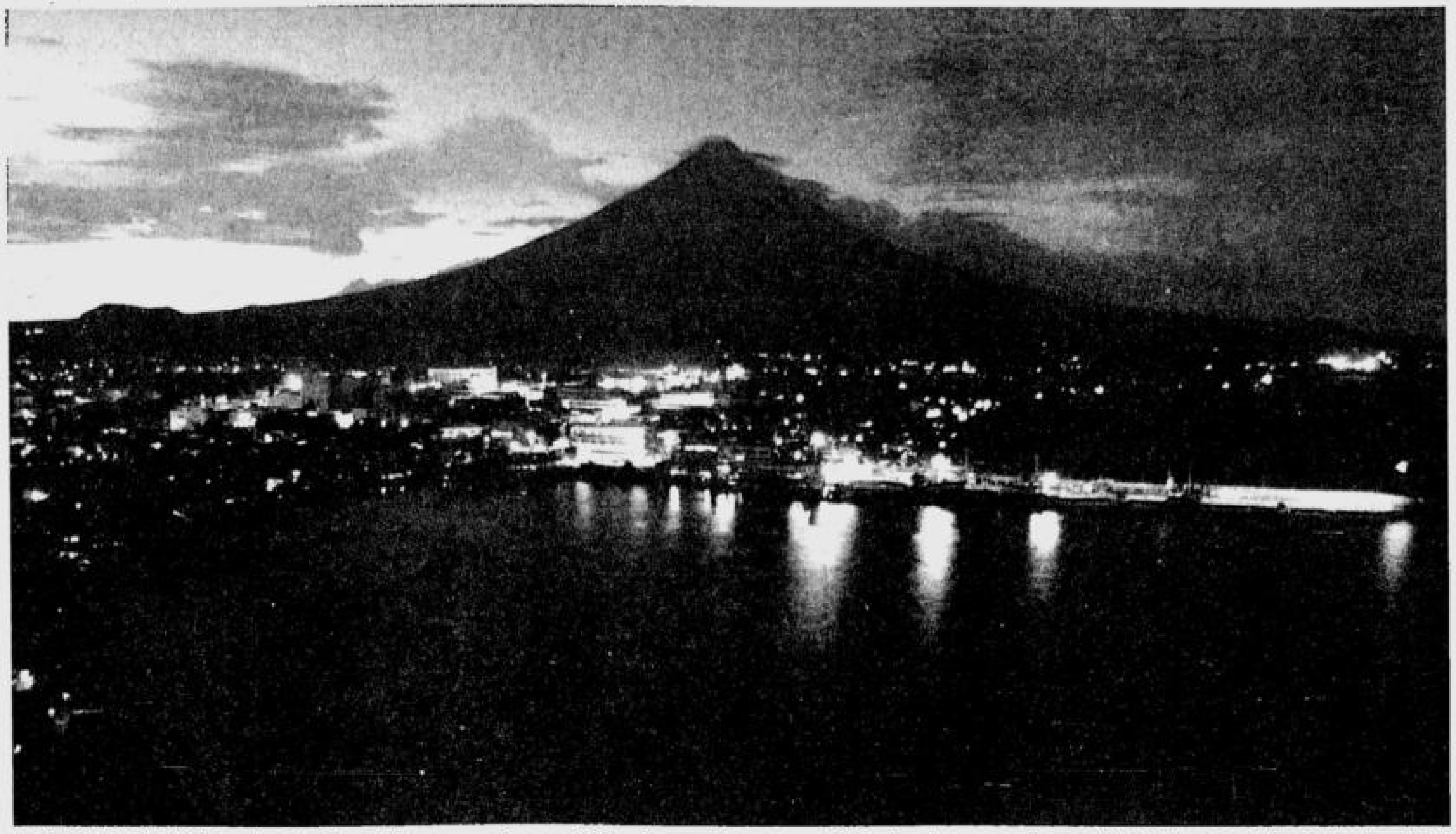

PICTURE PERFECT… deadly. Mayon Volcano and Legazpi City after sundown present a study of peace and tranquility in this photo taken Saturday night by the INQUIRER's Edwin Bacasmas.

Phivolcs 'bugs' Mayon using Japanese gizmo

BY REY NASOL

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology is installing an all-weather microphone at Mount Mayon after intermittent rains and thick clouds hampered close monitoring of abnormalities in the volcano.

Resident volcanologist Ed Laguerta said yesterday that Japanese volcanologists were putting up a "low frequency microphone" to help detect rumblings from Mayon even during rainy days and nights.

"Actually they are not here to help us assess the volcano's activities. They came here to give us the instrument. They will be staying here for four days. After that, they will go," Laguerta said.

Laguerta issued the explanation to assure residents around the volcano who had questioned the capability of Phivolcs scientists to correctly assess the condition of Mayon. He added that the instrument was made available through a grant from Japan in an act of friendship.

"The foreign scientists are not telling us what to do. They are just helping us adopt the technology to mitigate the hazards of a possible eruption," Laguerta said.

Thick clouds around the crater area have given volcanologists a difficult time in determining the volume of sulfur dioxide emitted by the volcano, one of the most important factors considered in predicting an imminent eruption.

Laguerta said even without the microphone, the Phivolcs was still capable of monitoring the volcano with the help of other devices.

Aside from telemetered seismographs operating round the clock without any hindrance, he said, Phivolcs had also been able to install an electronic tilt meter near the Mayon Resthouse Observatory in Tabaco town at about 1,330 meters above sea level.

He said the instrument tracked the movement of magma and provided additional baseline data, which could be compared to data fed to existing tilt meters.

The low frequency microphone will allow volcanologists to better hear rumbling sounds. Residents had earlier claimed to have heard the rumblings even before Phivolcs was able to issue a warning to the public.

San Fernando in Pampanga is RP's newest city

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga—The Commission on Elections declared Pampanga's capital town as the country's newest city yesterday, although only 24 percent of 85,901 registered voters cast their votes in a plebiscite that was peaceful but marred by allegations of fraud.

Emmanuel Ignacio, regional Comelec counsel, said official results of Saturday's plebiscite showed that 12,378 residents endorsed conversion to a city while 8,519 rejected it.

The town assumed the official name City of San Fernando in deference to, and to differentiate it from, San Fernando City in La Union, which was created on Feb. 13, 1998, Mayor Reynaldo Aquino said.

San Fernando became the second town in Pampanga and the eighth in Central Luzon to elect to become into a city.

At least 1,300 people in five villages where anti-city sentiment was high failed to participate. Their names were not in the lists sent to polling precincts, the Concerned Citizens of San Fernando reported.

The disenfranchised voters, mostly residents of Barangays San Nicolas, Del Pilar, Sta. Lucia, San Pedro Cutut and San Jose, have yet to file protests with the Comelec.

Municipal election officials said those who did not find their names might have failed to register in December last year.

Incidents of vote buying and coercion were reported on Saturday but these could not be confirmed. No incidents of violence were reported, according to police.

The poor turnout at the polls, despite the strong support by Gov. Manuel Lapid, Pampanga Rep. Oscar Rodriguez and Sen. Sergio Osmeña III for the plebiscite, indicated skepticism over this town's conversion into a component city, Councilor Millet Ocampo said.

She said it also suggested that Aquino's massive campaign for a yes vote failed to reach many in spite of his reported spending of P5.5 million in the past three years for the campaign.

Ocampo and members of the party-list group Bayan Muna earlier called for a deferment of the plebiscite.

In January, then President Joseph Estrada approved Republic Act 8990 converting this more than 300-year-old town into a component city.

Carved out from Mexico and Bacolor towns during the 1700s, San Fernando has become Central Luzon's main commercial and business hub beginning in the 1970s as a result of its strategic location. *Tonette Orejas, Jun Malig and Bert Basa, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Demetriou willing to testify

By G. G. Lacuarta

FORMER Commission on Elections chair Harriet Demetriou has said she would be willing to testify in any investigation into the Comelec's two shelved modernization projects after businessman Mark Jimenez hinted that ousted President Joseph Estrada had a hand in the aborted deals.

"I do not know what Mark Jimenez will testify on regarding the Comelec's modernization program," Demetriou said. "As former chair of the, Comelec, I am willing to testify in any official inquiry or investigation on the legal status of the two modernization projects."

Demetriou was referring to the Voters Registration and Identification System (VRIS) and the Automated Counting and Consolidation of Results System (ACCORS), which had been set for partial implementation before the May 14 elections but were shelved because of technical and legal ambiguities in the bidding.

"My testimony will be based on my findings as a result of my meticulous review of all the documents," Demetriou said.

Demetriou said she would submit to the Department of Justice copies of the bids, evaluation and awards documents and other pertinent papers, including Comelec resolutions and memorandums covering the two projects.

The WRIS, a five-year project to clean up the registration process and modernize identification cards with the use of computer technology, was to be awarded to the winning bidder, Photokina Marketing Corp. which submitted the lowest price of P6.5 billion, last December.

However, the Comelec was told by the Department of Budget and Management that it was not allowed to enter into a five-year contract.

Demetriou also noted certain provisions in the draft contract which she said were disadvantageous to the government.

Guia Gomez, one of Estrada's mistresses, is alleged to have been involved in the bidding, but this has been denied by Gomez and Photokina.

Demetriou said she would submit the draft contract to Justice Secretary Hernando Perez for his evaluation.

"Secretary Perez is also free to subpoena documents in the custody and possession of Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco," Demetriou said.

Tancangco heads the Comelec's modernization committee and its prequalification, bids, evaluation and award committee (PBAC-PBEC) which oversees the bidding for modernization projects.

The bidding for the Accors were also stalled after it was found that the bids submitted were higher than the available funds and because of procedural flaws in the conduct of the evaluation.

The Accors was aimed at hastening the counting and consolidation of election results through the use of counting machines and scanning technology.

The shelving of the two projects has forced the Comelec to resort to manual counting in the May 14 elections.

Demetriou, meanwhile, clarified that she reported for work last Feb. 2, her last day in office, contrary to an earlier report that only three Comelec officials—commissioners Teresita Dy-Liacco Flores, Mehol Sadain, and Julio Desamito—were present at the Comelec building that day.

An en banc session scheduled at 2 p.m. that day was cancelled for lack of a quorum. The en banc is composed of the chair and the six commissioners.

Demetriou, together with Flores and Desamito, stepped down at the end of their term last Feb. 2, but Malacañang has yet to appoint their replacement. The four remaining commissioners, however, still constitute a quorum in the en banc.

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German police detain Sirven

FRANKFURT—Former French oil executive Alfred Sirven was placed in German custody Saturday after being detained on his way back to France from the Philippines to face wide-ranging corruption charges.

Wanted in connection with a web of high-level political corruption woven around the French oil company Elf of which he was the deputy head, he had been a fugitive for nearly four years.

Sirven, who claims to possess information that could incriminate France's political elite, was detained by border police in Frankfurt in line with Europe's Schengen border agreement. He could be extradited to France next week.

A French military plane waiting to whisk him off to Paris was left standing idly by as Sirven was taken before a local judge just before midday.

The judge, Eva-Maria Wagner, said a Frankfurt court would have to rule on Sirven's extradition to France and that this could not take place before next week. "I am not able to authorize Mr. Sirven's immediate departure," Wagner said.

She did confirm that the 74-year-old former oil executive did not plan to fight the extradition and wanted to return to France as soon as possible.

France's justice ministry said Sirven was placed "under extraditional order by the German judicial authorities at the demand of France, a preliminary procedure to having him turned over to the French authorities."

Sirven is believed to have been in charge of running a massive Elf slush fund and is widely considered an important missing link in the corruption trial of former French foreign minister Roland Dumas.

Dumas, along with five others including his former girlfriend Christine Deviers-Joncour, is currently on trial in Paris, accused of profiting from Elf's generous coffers to fund his lavish lifestyle in the early 1990s.

The high-profile trial, which has transfixed the public with its heady mix of sex, power and money, has been put on hold pending Sirven's arrival back in France.

But Sirven is linked with other affairs too.

35 minors receive ₱1.2-M back wages

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

SOME 35 minors rescued from establishments using illegal child labor last year have received a total of P1.2 million in back wages and monetary benefits, the Department of Labor and Employment said yesterday.

Labor Undersecretary Jose Espanol Jr. said 13 child workers in the Cordillera Administrative Region got a total of P866,821 in monetary benefits. This was followed by 15 minors in the Ilocos Region who received P275,000, five in Central Luzon who got P51,020 and two in Southern Tagalog who received P18,950.

Espanol said the 35 children were among the 132 minors saved by the DOLE's Sagip Batang Manggagawa (SBM) team in 64 rescue operations last year.

The SBM is an inter-agency "quick action" group set up by the DOLE in 1994 to detect, monitor and rescue child laborers working in hazardous and exploitative conditions. Its members include representatives from the DOLE, the Departments of Social Welfare and Development, Justice, the National Bureau of Investigation and the Philippine National Police.

Español said the establishments from where the children were saved have been charged with violations of the country's labor and anti-child labor laws. Republic Act 7658 prohibits the employment of children below 15 years of age, while RA 7610 provides protection of children from abuse and discrimination.

RA 7658, however, allows the employment of children in cinema, theater, radio and television where their talents are deemed essential but employers must first acquire working child permits (WCP).

Records showed the DOLE issued 4,102 WCPs last year, mostly in Metro Manila, on top of 3,2249 WCPs it issued from 1996 to 1999. Most or 3,019 of the WCPs issued in 2000 covered children working on TV commercials.

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Angara...

(From page A1)

of thousands of demonstrators at the Edsa Shrine on the afternoon of Jan. 19.

Maganto said that on Friday afternoon, he was marching toward the shrine in Mandaluyong City with 500 of his men to join the mammoth rally.

He explained that there were no anti-Estrada demonstrators at Mendiola on Jan. 19. A crowd from the shrine only marched to the bridge near Malacañang at dawn Saturday.

Maganto arrived at Mendiola before the protesters reached the bridge around 8:30 a.m., and ordered his men to secure the area to prevent violence between pro- and anti-Estrada demonstrators.

While Maganto said that he did help protesters get through police barricades near the Palace, he clarified that "when the protesters occupied Mendiola, I told them not to go any further."

Angara also wrote that former Interior Secretary Alfredo Lim left Malacañang between 2-2:30 p.m. Friday, saying he would "mobilize Maganto." *(Ed's note: Lim's quote in yesterday's article should have read: "'Imo-mobilize' ko lang si Maganto [I will mobilize Maganto].")*

Maganto also revealed that as early as 12 noon Friday, he had turned off his cellular phone.

"I turned it off because I knew Secretary Lim could have talked me into going to Malacañang and siding with (the Estrada camp). I owe him that much," he said.

"But I decided as early as Tuesday night, when the senators voted not to open the envelope, that I should withdraw support.

"I understood (Lim's) situation then. He also owed a lot to the President," Maganto added.

When Lim arrived at the shrine and saw Maganto on Friday afternoon, the secretary told him that he had wanted to contact him earlier—so that he could join Maganto in his march to the shrine.

During talks, 2 sides acted in bad faith

(From page A1)

exercise her leadership over these groups.

I tell the negotiators: "I am sincere in getting the problem out of the way to normalize the situation as soon as possible."

We want no violence, just a peaceful transition, and I will exert all efforts to prevent any violence from taking place.

The President has accepted that he will leave the Palace, I explain, but insists on the five-day transition period.

Rene wants to know why the President needs five days. "Why can't he leave by 6 a.m.?" he asks.

I answer: "I can only surmise that it is because (Armed Forces Chief of Staff) General (Angelo) Reyes has promised the President a five-day transition period. He would turn over the presidency to Gloria on the 24th. I was not privy to their conversation, but I can only guess that the five days would be just enough time for the President to advise his family, friends and supporters of his decision to go."

The President did, after all, have a good number of supporters. I explain to the panel that he cannot be pushed to leave the Palace earlier, since he has General Reyes' assurance.

'He is down'

I tell them that the President is quite certain of the five-day transition period and will not easily change his mind into accepting a 6 a.m. deadline.

Rene immediately raises a concern: "What if the President organizes a counter-attack in the five days?"

"Let us be realistic," I counter. "The President does not have the capability to organize a counter-attack. He does not have the AFP or the Philippine National Police on his side. He is not only in a corner—he is also down."

Bert Romulo chimes in, speaking at the top of his voice.

"My mandate is for you to leave by 6 a.m. Otherwise, if that is not accomplished, I cannot come back here anymore," he tells me.

For the sake of reaching an agreement, I ask all not to take a hardline stance. I explain that it takes time to convince the President, who needs time to accept things.

I explain that "the President just wants to vindicate his name. The envelope (containing information on bank accounts allegedly owned by Estrada) is, after all, the spark that ignited this conflagration."

Rene answers that "vindication is not always on the day itself."

"But we have the occasion to vindicate ourselves now," I reply. "Let us take this opportunity."

I explain that after the envelope is opened at the impeachment trial, the President can leave already—even before the five-day period is over.

3 crucial points

I stress the three points most important to the President. One, he will hand in his resignation, but to take effect five days later. The five-day transition period is crucial. If Reyes never made that assurance, he should call the President to explain that he did not assure him of the transition period.

Two, there must be a guarantee of the safety of the President and his family.

And three, there must be an agreement to open the second envelope.

I tell them that I am "sincere in getting the problem out of the way to normalize the situation as soon as possible."

Rene says that we should meet again at 3 a.m. I answer that we should meet at 7 a.m. instead since we all need some rest. But, Rene tells me, "7 a.m. may be too late, since *lulusubin ang Malacañang* (Malacañang will be attacked) by 6 a.m."

We agree to hold a second round of negotiations by 6 a.m.

The first round of negotiations ends at 2:20 a.m.

Erap: 'It hurts'

2:30 a.m.—I return to the Presidential Residence and enter the small conference room where the President is waiting. With him are Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and his chief of staff Gigi Reyes, Lito Banayo, Ronnie Puno, Dondon Bagatsing and Boying Remulla.

I explain what happened during the first round of negotiations. The President immediately stresses that he just wants the five-day period promised by Reyes, as well as to open the second envelope to clear his name.

If the envelope is opened on Monday, he says, he will leave by Monday.

The President says: "*Pagod na pagod na ako. Ayoko na—masyado nang masakit. Pagod na ako sa red tape, bureaucracy, intriga.* (I am very tired. I don't want any more of this—it's too painful. I'm tired of the red tape, the bureaucracy, the intrigue.)

"I just want to clear my name, then I will go."

I had been advising the President nonstop since the day before. The President pauses and tells me, "*Mula umpisa pa lang ng kampanya, Ed, ikaw na lang pinakikinggan ko. At hanggang sa huli, ikaw pa rin.* (Since the start of the campaign, Ed, you have been the only one I've listened to. And now at the end, you still are)."

Remulla's letter

Boying Remulla pulls out a letter he has prepared for the President to sign.

It reads: "By virtue of the provisions of Article VII, Section 11 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, I am hereby transmitting to your Office this written declaration that I am unable to discharge the powers and duties of my Office. By operation of law and the Constitution, the Vice President shall be Acting President of the Republic of the Philippines."

Boying explains that with this provision, the President will still enjoy the benefit of presidential immunity and can resume his presidency when he decides to do so.

Ronnie Puno supports Boying.

But I oppose the signing of this letter. It would only prolong the crisis, I say, since it would not solve the political problems that are taking place.

'Sign of bad faith'

A discussion ensues, with Lito Banayo supporting my stand. I explain that this letter is not practical under the circumstances since it would be construed as a shallow attempt to hang on.

This would be particularly bad since negotiations have centered on the President's turnover of the administration to Gloria, and this letter would be clearly construed as a sign of bad faith on our part.

Senator Enrile is silent throughout the discussion.

I step out, upset at what Boying is trying to do. I feel that this is an ill-advised and bad move, and I hope that the President will not listen to Boying.

Lito Banayo follows me. "*Hindi maganda yung sulat na yon* (That isn't a good letter)," I point out to him.

Macel stays on in the room. Later, she tells me that she noticed that Boying approached the President and Senator Enrile several times when I was away, trying to convince them about the letter.

She adds, however, that she thinks that the President will not listen to Boying.

Hug from Johnny

4 a.m.—Senator Enrile says goodbye to the President, and hugs him tightly.

I am constantly on the phone with General Reyes, Titoy Pardo and Rene de Villa.

Rene de Villa proposes two additional points for negotiations—that during the five-day transition period:

- The AFP and PNP would function under the Vice President as national military and police authorities.
- The transition process would begin immediately, and persons designated by the Vice President to government positions would be immediately briefed by their counterpart.

I write down the five points of negotiation.

4:30 a.m.—I ask that the whole family of the President be present as I explain the points of negotiation that are being discussed.

After having explained them to the President, it is now time for the First Lady and for the President's children who are present—Jinggoy, JV Ejercito, Jackie and Techie—to hear about the points of negotiation.

We start preparing the draft for discussion at the 6 a.m. meeting. Five points are hammered out based on repeated phone calls between myself, De Villa, General Reyes and Titoy Pardo, who have been relaying to me feedback from the Cory Aquino group and the Ramos group.

Breakfast

5:30 a.m.—The President, his family and a few friends have breakfast at the residence.

Many people have since asked me, "Was the President drunk that night?" No, he was not. He was sober.

6 a.m.—I receive a phone call from De Villa, who apologizes, saying that the emissaries will not be able to make it for the 6 a.m. round of negotiations and will arrive late at 7 a.m.

Rene tells me: "Before it gets to you from elsewhere, I want you to know that somebody tried to arrange for Gloria's oath-taking at noontime. I did not know about this, and got mad because it smacks of bad faith in our negotiations. I told them that if they proceed with the oath, I will resign from the panel."

6:30 a.m.—I proceed to Mabini Hall where we finalize our draft and other documents. I wait for Rene.

Opposition's deal

7:30 a.m.—Rene arrives with Bert Romulo and (Ms Macapagal's spokesperson) Rene Corona. For this round, I am accompanied by Dondon Bagatsing and Macel.

Rene pulls out a document titled "Negotiating Points." It reads:

"1. The President shall sign a resignation document within the day, 20 January 2001, that will be effective on Wednesday, 24 January 2001, on which day the Vice President will assume the Presidency of the Republic of the Philippines.

"2. Beginning today, 20 January 2001, the transition process for the assumption of the new administration shall commence, and persons designated by the Vice President to various positions and offices of the government shall start their orientation activities in coordination with the incumbent officials concerned.

"3. The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police shall function under the Vice President as national military and police authority effective immediately.

"4. The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through its Chief of Staff, shall guarantee the security of the President and his family as approved by the national military and police authority (Vice President).

"5. It is to be noted that the Senate will open the second envelope in connection with the alleged savings account of the President in the Equitable PCI Bank in accordance with the rules of the Senate, pursuant to the request to the Senate President."

Our deal

We bring out, too, our discussion draft which reads:

"The undersigned parties, for and in behalf of their respective principals, agree and undertake as follows:

"1. A transition will occur and take place on Wednesday, 24 January 2001, at which time President Joseph Ejercito Estrada will turn over the presidency to Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"2. In return, President Estrada and his families are guaranteed security and safety of their person and property throughout their natural lifetimes. Likewise, President Estrada and his families are guaranteed freedom from persecution or retaliation from government and the private sector throughout their natural lifetimes.

"This commitment shall be guaranteed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines ('AFP') through the Chief of Staff, as approved by the national military and police authorities—Vice President (Macapagal).

"3. Both parties shall endeavor to ensure that the Senate sitting as an impeachment court will authorize the opening of the second envelope in the impeachment trial as proof that the subject savings account does not belong to President Estrada.

"4. During the five-day transition period between 20 January 2001 and 24 January 2001 (the "Transition Period"), the incoming Cabinet members shall receive an appropriate briefing from the outgoing Cabinet officials as part of the orientation program.

"During the Transition Period, the AFP and the Philippine National Police ('PNP') shall function under Vice President (Macapagal) as national military and police authorities.

"Both parties hereto agree that the AFP chief of staff and PNP director general shall obtain all the necessary signatures as affixed to this agreement and insure faithful implementation and observance thereof.

"Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo shall issue a public statement in the form and tenor provided for in 'Annex A' heretofore attached to this agreement."

Without our knowledge

Rene Corona stresses that the envelope can only be opened by the Senate President, and not the Senate sitting as an impeachment court "since there is no going back to the trial."

The emissaries also insist that the resignation letter should be signed today, Jan. 20.

Corona says that a separate resignation letter is the deal-breaker, the absolute minimum, or the whole deal collapses.

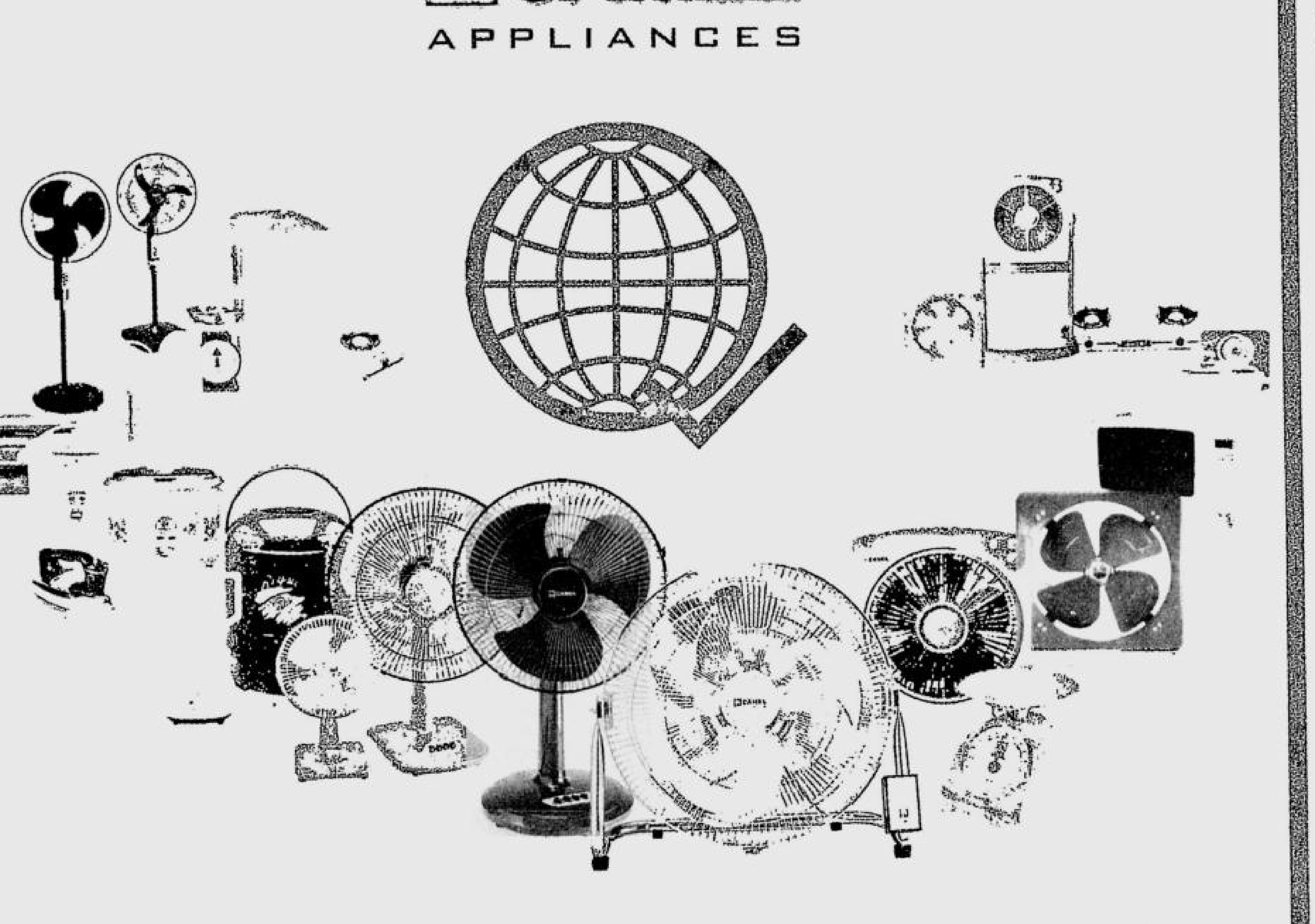
Macel mentions that the turnover should be sufficient since by the acts of the President, one can see that there is an intention to relinquish his position.

Rene Corona answers: "You are a bar topnotcher. You should know that a resignation has to be an unequivocal act and should be in a letter."

The second round of negotiations ends around 9:30 a.m.

But without our knowledge, the President has apparently signed the Remulla letter, which is transmitted to Speaker (Arnulfo) Fuentebella at 8:30 a.m. today, Jan. 20.

A copy is transmitted to Pimentel and received Monday, Jan. 22. We are not informed of this until Sunday afternoon, when I receive a faxed, signed and transmitted copy of the letter. (*To be concluded tomorrow*)



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Lawyers avoiding Estrada

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada is having difficulty finding a lawyer to defend him from corruption charges due to public outrage against him, his former lawyer said yesterday.

Estrada, ousted amid massive protests Jan. 20, is under investigation for possible criminal corruption charges. Prosecutors allege he accumulated P10 billion to P15 billion in bribes and kickbacks during 31 months in office.

Raymund Fortun, Estrada's lawyer during his 24-day impeachment trial, said he and others in his firm declined to continue representing the former president because of heavy workloads. The firm holds the paperwork and legal history of the aborted impeachment trial and Estrada has asked them to transfer it.

Nobody has accepted the job so far, said Fortun.

"President Estrada is really in a quandary because he would like to respond but because of the prevailing hostile atmosphere, nobody seems to want to handle his case," Fortun told the Associated Press.

"It's like you becoming a devil's advocate," he said. The perception is "terrible, it's so unfair."

Fortun said lawyers think the chances of winning Estrada's cases were "so slim because of the public perception and the pressure that are put to bear on the decision-makers."

Fortun said at least two other firms are considering taking the case but are concerned they don't have enough staff.

Others worried the stigma of the fallen president would affect their chances of getting future clients, Fortun said.

He said a large university ended their firm's legal services last month because of public outrage after Senators acting as impeachment trial judges voted to deny prosecutors access to evidence they said would have proven Estrada kept an undeclared fortune in secret bank accounts.

Prosecutors resigned en masse after that, bringing Estrada's impeachment trial to an impasse and setting off huge street protests that ultimately led to the downfall of the once-popular leader.

Some firms demanded tremendously high fees, Fortun said. He said one law firm demanded a P50 million "acceptance fee," not including the main representation fees.

Estrada, without a lawyer, was forced to file a complaint last week against government tax collectors and Citibank officials who froze one of his bank accounts. He signed the complaint himself, Fortun said.

Estrada has also asked a court for more time to answer the corruption allegations, Fortun said. Government ombudsman Aniano Desierto has ordered Estrada to answer the allegations this week.

Desierto is investigating Estrada on six charges—economic plunder, malversation (misuse of funds), violations of the anti-graft law, perjury, bribery and possession of unexplained wealth. *AP*

Danding party steers new course away from Erap

DIGOS CITY—The political party headed by a close friend and supporter of ousted President Joseph Estrada has turned around and pledged to actively work with the new Macapagal administration.

In a resolution adopted during its convention in Manila last week, the Nationalist People's Coalition headed by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. said it saw the need for national unity after the recent political events in the country.

"The party will craft and pursue policies which will heal wounds or divisions in society, seek an end to conflicts and advocate rational and economically sustainable development policies," read the resolution which was signed by the party's 16 regional chairmen.

The NPC was allied with Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and other parties in the coalition Laban ng Makabayang Masang Pilipino or LAMMP.

The coalition started to come apart after Estrada was ousted in a popular uprising following charges he had amassed ill-gotten wealth while in office.

The NPC said it would now only ally itself with parties that do not sacrifice their principles.

The party said it would continue to stand up against obstructionism, extremism, partisanship and other unprofessional conduct.

Among those who signed the two-page document on Jan. 29 were party representatives Congressmen Harry Angping, Didagen Dilangalen and Rodolfo Fariñas and former environment secretary Antonio Cerilles.

In Isabela, a party official said the NPC would not field its own candidates in the May 14 elections but will support candidates from other parties.

Isabela Rep. Faustino Dy Jr., NPC secretary general, said the candidates to be endorsed by the party are "those we think would be bright and would help the country develop... provided they would uphold the party's policies."

Dy said the party would hold discussions to formalize its list of 12 senatorial candidates to support. He did not discount the possibility that the party might support former first lady Dr. Luisa Ejercito's bid for a senatorial seat. ***Allan A. Nawal, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Neda redrawing power bill, says solon

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL

DESPITE the announcement of the Macapagal administration that it would place the controversial Omnibus Power Bill on the backburner, a congresswoman revealed yesterday the act was being rewritten for possible passage before Congress closes on Feb. 8.

Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales said economic and finance officials have started redrafting the bill, apparently in accordance with the wishes of the International Monetary Fund.

"Instead of upholding the President's decision to shelve the bill for better legislation in the 12th Congress, we find it unfortunate that we now have Neda Director General Dante Canlas and officials of the Department of Finance kowtowing to IMF dictation," Rosales said in a press statement.

"We are now told that even in violation of the separation of powers, both executive agencies are feverishly crafting a redrafted bill for congressional ratification before sessions end on Feb. 8. Are we under the new administration as subservient to the IMF as the past discredited government?" she added.

Rosales said that with the huge budget deficit inherited by the new administration, the most rational course would be to renegotiate and restructure the loans of the National Power Corp., instead of privatizing it.

"Unfortunately, despite its bold and recent pronouncements favoring corruption-free and democratic governments in its loan policies for 2000, the IMF appears to have no penchant to help strengthen the economic and democratic structures of the newly installed Macapagal administration that succeeded the graft-ridden Estrada government," Rosales said.

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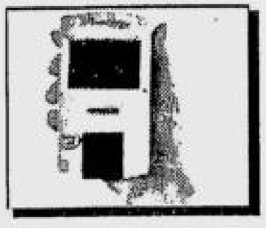

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- Intends to pursue a master's degree in Japan specializing in the following disciplines:

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****Must have majored in the same or closely related courses.*

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OPINION

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Truth and justice

EDITORIAL

RECENTLY, relatives and supporters of ousted President Joseph Ejercito Estrada complained about what they called the "vindictiveness" of the Macapagal administration. They said that the administration should stop persecuting the Estrada family. Their supporters asked why the government should be concentrating on the Estrada cases when little has been done about corruption and human rights cases in the Marcos, Aquino and Ramos administrations.

As we've previously said, this is not a matter of vindictiveness but of justice. The people have to obtain justice for the many wrongs committed by Estrada, his officials and his cronies against them. This is not a case of persecution but one of prosecution of cases against Estrada that are backed by evidence.

As for the prosecution of corruption and human rights cases against officials (and the relatives) of the Marcos, Aquino and Ramos administrations, yes, why not have these cases prosecuted now, before they lapse. Now is as good a time as any for the people to obtain justice for the wrongs done to them by officials of previous administrations. But priority must be given to the cases involving former President Estrada to prevent evidence from being destroyed or altered and to prevent him from using his alleged ill-gotten wealth to destabilize the new administration.

The Estrada administration ultimately fell on the twin issues of truth and justice. When the Craven Eleven voted not to disclose the contents of the second envelope at the impeachment trial, they suppressed the truth that could have been one of the bases for the dispensation of justice. The Senate impeachment trial has been suspended because of People Power II which toppled the Estrada presidency. But now the search for truth will be continued, not in the Senate sitting as a court, but in the regular courts of the country.

And while we are trying to unearth the truth, we may as well have the long arm of the law reach back to its alleged violators, to the corruptors and the corrupted, to the perpetrators of human rights abuses in the Marcos, Aquino and Ramos administrations. There should be no discrimination when it comes to criminals who formerly wore the mantle of official authority.

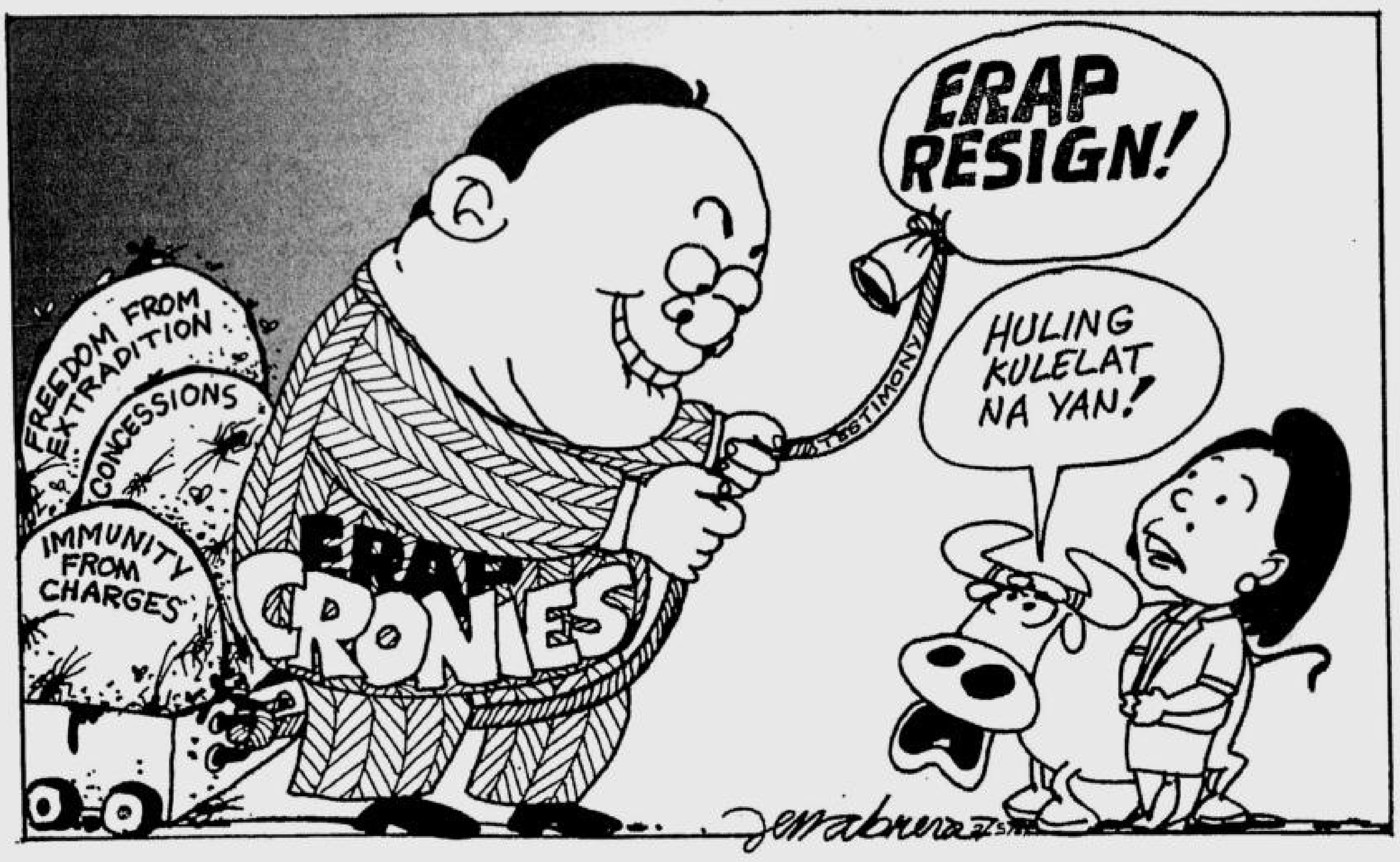
The body to conduct this wide-ranging investigation should be a truth commission of the likes of those set up at the initiative of the state or civil society in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, South Africa and Uruguay.

In the 1980s the Argentinian and Chilean governments formed truth commissions to investigate wrongdoings in the past. Argentina prosecuted high officials of the military junta. In Chile some notorious violators of human rights were prosecuted and convicted despite the military's self-amnesty. Chile's Gen. Augusto Pinochet, facing homicide and kidnapping charges, has been placed under house arrest. In Brazil and Uruguay, church groups and non-government organizations set up unofficial truth commissions.

Fr. John J. Caroll, S.J., recalls that in Brazil, even while the military was still in power, a team of lawyers supported by the Catholic and Protestant churches secretly photocopied more than a million pages of military records of interrogations, tortures and murder of suspects. When condensed to readable length and secretly printed, the report titled "Brazil: Nunca Mais (Brazil: Never Again)" hit the newsstands like a bombshell.

In South Africa an official truth commission has brought to light the crimes not only of the defenders of apartheid but also of Winnie Mandela, the estranged wife of national hero Nelson Mandela. South Korea was able to jail former presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo for mutiny, treason and corruption. After more than two years in prison, they were granted amnesty by Kim Dae-jung, the man their martial law government sentenced to death almost two decades ago.

If all these countries—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, South Africa, South Korea and Uruguay—could do it, why can't we? Can a nation that was able to pull off two People Power uprisings not obtain simple justice for itself? Yes, let us have unity and reconciliation, but not at the expense of truth and justice. Dr. Alran Bengzon at a conference two years ago said that more than a decade after Edsa I, the Filipino people had not made a choice between a false reconciliation based on forgetfulness, oblivion and deceit or a genuine one based on truth and justice. It's about time we made a firm choice. It has almost become a cliché, but we have to repeat it: The truth will set us free. It will cleanse the body politic and provide a basis for a new beginning.



GMA has rare chance to show a new justice system

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SHOULD ousted President Erap be exiled or prosecuted here? President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's reply is that "exile is Estrada's call," in effect washing her hands of the decision. Former Senate President Jovito Salonga and his Kilosbayan disagree.

"Exile or no exile is your call, President Gloria, not Erap's," said Salonga in a statement faxed to this writer.

Salonga said the Philippines has been known as a "soft state" by other countries "because of its apparent inability to maintain a fair and effective system of public accountability and justice."

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of the Marcoses. Fifteen years after they were ousted in the first People Power in 1986, they have not yet been made to account for their crimes of looting the public coffers and stashing the loot in numbered accounts in foreign banks. The cases against them are sleeping the sleep of the dead in the Sandiganbayan ironically, a special court created specifically to try with quick dispatch graft cases against public officials. Fifteen years after they were driven to exile, the Marcoses have returned but, instead of being punished, were rewarded with election to public office in their home provinces. Imelda Marcos still flaunts her wealth and irritates civil society with her pronouncements. She even wants to be mayor of Manila.

Hence, our image as a "soft state" in the eyes of the world. In contrast, other Asian states like Singapore, South Korea and Japan have a no-nonsense system of justice and have no qualms about punishing former heads of state and government.

"Singapore, a small island state, with no natural resources, was a poor, demoralized country in the early '60s," wrote Salonga. "But it is now considered a developed—not a developing—country because, among other things, it has a no-nonsense system of justice. We do not admire Singapore's authoritarian system, but we do admire its uncompromising fight against corruption and betrayal of public trust. *Walang lagay, pare-pareho ang lahat, at walang lakaran at palakasan.* (No bribery, no discrimination and no influence peddling.) South Korea is a relatively new democracy, but despite the communist regime in North Korea, it jailed two former presidents for graft, corruption and abuse of power in February 1996—Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo." Japan may I add, have also convicted former prime ministers for graft and corruption.

"We have the rare chance," continued Salonga, "of showing to the watching world what kind of justice system we now have, thanks to People Power II and to a new president whose transition team, we have been told, made no deals and entered into no compromise with the discredited president, shortly before he relinquished power in the afternoon of Jan. 20, 2001.

"The public policy at stake here is to hold former President Estrada fully accountable, under the Constitution and the laws, for what he did as a public official."

Which means to throw the book at him in the criminal courts. It can be said that the administration of President Corazon Aquino was not able to prosecute the Marcoses immediately because they were in Hawaii, out of the jurisdiction of Philippine courts. But now Erap is still here, although some public officials are suggesting that he be exiled to remove a thorn on the side of the Macapagal administration.

"The basis of jurisdiction," Salonga reminds President Macapagal and her Cabinet, "is physical power over persons and things. Jurisdiction over the person and the alleged ill-gotten acquisitions of former President Estrada is a distinct advantage we should not throw away. Due to the intervention of the United States on Feb. 25, 1986, the Philippines, reeling from 20 years of the brutal, corrupt Marcos regime, could not assume jurisdiction over Marcos and his ill-gotten wealth in foreign jurisdictions.

"But now, there is no reason in the world why jurisdiction over the person and bank accounts of Estrada should be waived—unless the Macapagal-Arroyo government chooses to be branded everywhere as a government without any direction, moral courage and political will. Otherwise the hundreds of thousands of students and ordinary citizens who, in their idealism and outrage, flocked to Edsa and to the various plazas and squares throughout the country, in protest against the gross denial of justice in the Senate impeachment trial, will feel sorely betrayed. People Power II was not simply about ousting Estrada; it is about doing justice to the Filipino people and respecting the rule of law in holding the former president fully accountable by a government whose president promises to be good and—we hope—just.

"For plain, simple justice continues to be the clamor of our aggrieved people."

* * *

TODAY's Gloria-Erap joke:

One more proof that Erap is no longer president is that his radio-TV show, "Jeep ni Erap," is no more. It will be replaced by a new show, "Stroller ni Gloria."

Reversal of fortune

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

PRESIDENTIAL spokesperson, Renato Corona, says the May "election will be Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's first political test, so I think she herself will campaign."

I should most certainly hope not.

I should hope, for the sake of the United Opposition candidates, that Macapagal does *not* turn the equation into a test of her acceptance, or worse popularity. I should hope, for the sake of the United Opposition candidates, that she does *not* openly bless them or stomp the campaign trail with them.

That was what Erap wanted to happen from the start when he—or his alter ego, Juan Ponce Enrile—proposed "snap elections" to forestall an impeachment. He wanted to show up the lack of a strong alternative, or a successor the public could receive with unadulterated enthusiasm. He was right. As it turned out, Macapagal could not draw crowds of her own but had to depend on Corazon Aquino and Jaime Cardinal Sin to do it for her—for which she must remain eternally grateful. Even then, the crowds were nowhere near to being those that flocked to Aquino's side before the first Edsa, which must also show the extent to which Aquino's drawing power has gone.

Macapagal was not a rallying point in Edsa Dos, she was a ground for dissension. To this day, I have yet to find 10 just people say they took to the street and endured its discomforts for her. I don't know that Macapagal's assumption into the presidency, notwithstanding that office's incalculable powers of persuasion through largesse and patronage, has greatly improved her attractiveness, or mass appeal. I wouldn't discount it, but I wouldn't bet on it either when it comes to challenging Erap. Certainly, I wouldn't read more into Pulse Asia's survey than what it says at face value—that Macapagal's stock has risen. People Power has given the public a new sense of optimism. But an election that is widely perceived to be a fight between Macapagal and Erap, via their proxies, will not be very good for Macapagal's proxies.

But without that undue interference, will the United Opposition, or the "Edsa Forces," or "People Power Coalition," as they call themselves now, fare very well in the elections? Will they now sweep the *trapos*, the entertainers and Erap's anointed as a result of People Power II?

I remember saying late last year that the way things were going, the May elections were bound to go the route of the November 1971 senatorial elections. What presaged the 1971 elections of course was the Plaza Miranda bombing—on Aug. 21, truly a cruel date in Philippine history—which was universally attributed to Marcos. Came the elections, all but one of Marcos' anointed was left standing. The Liberal Party candidates, limping or hopping with one leg on the stage where they still could, swept the field like a scythe.

I said the May elections would duplicate that if Erap were acquitted. And he looked headed for it last year, he had the numbers in the Senate. The acquittal, I said, would have the same effect as the bomb that rocked Plaza Miranda, an iniquity that would shock the Filipino voters to their senses. They would reject Erap's anointed to a man, or woman.

People Power II has changed the equation radically.

I am hoping its residual effect will bring the Edsa Forces to rout the opposition. Here at least, I am comforted by the thought that Enrile, the man who said People Power II would end up in the dustbin of history—"*kankungan*" was the word he used, appropriating activist vocabulary—will soon get to have first-hand knowledge of the place, if he hasn't done so already. *Dagdag-bawas* or not, he will finally find the door shut to his face in this life, which should prepare him for his reception in the next. The same is true of Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Tessie Aquino-Oreta, Ernesto Maceda and Estelito Mendoza if they should think to run again, or run at all. Their careers are over. Or since it is hard to say anything with finality in this forgetful country, at least in deep freeze.

But two things are worth thinking about, or better still doing something about. The first is Erap's image as a beaten man, an image Filipinos tend to sympathize with for reasons that are not hard to fathom. Overnight, Erap has turned from bully to underdog, which is a role he can exploit to the hilt, aided in no small way by his acting skills. The Marcoses tried to cut that figure in the past, to little avail as martial law was too painful a memory to forget. Erap had only more than a couple of years of gangsterism to put behind him, which he can pass off as a phase in his life, or a bad role, or the role of a bad man who gets his comeuppance such as he played in his movies, Asiong Salonga chief of them. Marcos could never cut the role of a picaresque rogue. Erap can, and with the power of time to rewrite scripts, will earnestly try to.

Can he do it in time for the May elections? I don't know. But I would think that makes the reduction of the May elections into a fight between Macapagal and Erap doubly dangerous.

Which brings me to the second point, which is that Macapagal is, well, glorious. She is in power, which puts her and her anointed on the defensive rather than the offensive. It gives their opponents a target to aim at, the arrows not always deflected by replying they've had only three months to work on. It isn't helped by the fact that Macapagal doesn't have the moral high ground, she just happened to be in the right place at the right time. It invites disunity within the ranks and suspicion on the part of the public. Easy to be united in anger, not so easy to be united in power. Power is a natural breeder of envy and strife. And discontent among the public. That must be obvious in the brickbats that came Macapagal's way with her appointments. And new iniquities, or the hint of them—such as the Macapagal harboring *trapos* in her administration—have a way of drowning out the old, like whitewash over a wall filled with graffiti.

Add to these the unleashing of ill-gotten wealth by Erap and his cronies—such as remain of them, Lucio Tan having flown the coop faster than the speed of PAL—in a last-ditch effort at political recovery through the elections, and you have a volatile situation this May.

This is where I'm putting my faith or pinning my hopes or investing my dreams on what we may do to keep People Power alive. People flocked to the Edsa Shrine last January not for Macapagal or Aquino or Sin but for their children. How to persuade people to vote for the Edsa Forces or the People Power Coalition not for Gloria or Cory or Sin but for their children?

There's work cut out for us.

Taking a new look at coco levy funds

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE MACAPAGAL administration has apparently decided to take the coconut levy issue by the horns, which is the right and moral thing to do. President Macapagal has suspended the Executive Order issued by her predecessor which would have implemented a compromise deal with some super-wealthy coconut farmers regarding the sale of sequestered San Miguel Corp. shares. The Estrada EO would have left the management of the coco levy funds to be generated from the SMC sale to the very people who had profited from them enormously in the past.

* * *

These SMC shares were believed by the government to have been acquired with coco levy funds in the '70s; those who had handled those funds in the Marcos era insist till now that these were private funds, but the Aquino and Ramos administrations and no less than the Supreme Court have held that they were "in the nature of public funds."

Upon the recommendation of Finance Chief Alberto Romulo, Macapagal has set up a legal group to study all issues relating to the SMC shares and the government is said to be poised to reclaim the disputed 27 percent stake in SMC, worth over P38 billion. It is also studying the possibility of challenging the leadership of SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco, whose return was facilitated in the past regime.

* * *

In the Estrada years it was touted that it was Cojuangco's management genius that enabled SMC to recover its old position of preeminence, and that should this set-up be disturbed by a revamp, investor confidence might be affected. Secretary Romulo doesn't think so. He was quoted as opining that what is needed is to get the best management team for SMC and that "there might be better people than (Cojuangco). I agree. What will boost investor confidence is ensuring a level playing field, not preferential treatment for cronies as in the past regime.

* * *

In the light of the renewed efforts to resolve the coco levy fund issue in favor of the small coconut farmers, former Philippine Coconut Authority chair Jose Romero Jr. has stressed the need to discern the "authentic and genuine voice of the lowly coconut farmer." Romero, who has been studying this highly controversial issue in depth over the years, asserts that the "faceless millions" of mostly illiterate and hand-to-mouth coconut farmers had been exploited by *compradores* and victimized by "exploitative presidential decrees favoring coconut monopolists."

Romero pointed out that in the past, a handful of entrepreneurs collected millions of pesos in levy from them, ostensibly to help develop the industry. But sadly, until now, 25 years later, the coconut farmers "still have to taste the fruits of their levy contribution that came from their blood, sweat and tears." What happened instead, he asserts, was that these entrepreneurs lined their pockets with the proceeds of these levy funds, now worth about P150 billion—most of which were invested in privately owned enterprises, despite their being public funds.

* * *

The lowly coco farmers' tragedy, says Romero, is their lack of organization, "which deprives them of a single voice—an authentic voice." He opines that further exploitation of these farmers can be prevented by "greater transparency" in the process involving the return of the coco levy funds, now tied up in fixed and financial assets in the United Coconut Planters Bank, the Coconut Industry Investment Fund, San Miguel Corp., etc.

Turning to the new administration, Romero queries: "What can it offer that can radically alter the level of income, employment and productivity in the coconut farm sector?" He stresses that the small coco farmers have now pinned their trust on President Macapagal, and that as an economist she knows that the emancipation of the coco farmers is "the lynchpin" of her countryside development program, because of the huge size of the coconut farming sector. Romero stressed that Macapagal is doubtless aware that income and productivity gain, financed by the coco levy funds, can give a big push to the agricultural sector, which is a vital component of the gross domestic product (GDP).

* * *

A friend on the short list for the Energy portfolio is former Taguig Rep. Dante Tinga. A magna cum laude law graduate of the UE College of Law, where he later served as dean, and a master's from California, Dante's advantage is that he chaired the House committee on energy for six years in the 9th and 10th Congress. In that post Tinga helped install measures to address the power shortage prevailing then, and oversee the operations of the new Department of Energy.

* * *

Last Sunday, Jan. 28, the family of the late Helen Gantioqui-Moreno, relatives and friends accompanied her body to Manila Memorial Park where it was cremated. Helen, beloved wife of corporate executive Ruy Moreno and mother to Rodrigo, Marga and her husband Henry Aquende, had spent her last days rallying every day at Edsa and her slightly enlarged heart gave way to fatigue. She collapsed of a heart attack last Jan. 24 at her Alabang home, but she must have died happy about the dawning of a new political era.

I had known Helen and Ruy from way back. Helen and I shared a fondness for antiques. We became quite close when my husband became Philippine Ambassador to Cambodia and Ruy was country representative of Arthur Andersen in next-door Vietnam and later our honorary consul there. On our periodic visits to Ho Chi Minh City we would never fail to look up the Morenos, who were the embodiment of hospitality. Once, we called up on very short notice that the Philippine football team would be staying overnight in Ho Chi Minh en route to Manila from a competition series in Phnom Penh. Could the Morenos host a dinner for them (the football federation had no budget for this)? No problem, said Helen and she laid out a garden party for the team.

* * *

Helen, a lovely vivacious woman, was deeply involved in the country's issues. Despite her comfortable life, she became barangay captain of BF Homes Parañaque for six years. When she died her former people held a necrological service for her at the BF barangay hall she had built. Her successor, capitana Beng Amurao, tearfully spoke of the legacy Helen left and how, with her enormous charisma and the way she stood up for her principles, she could have really gone on to become councilor, mayor and who knows what else, if she really had set her mind to it. That political career was aborted by Ruy's Vietnam stint.

Capitana Amurao also stressed how Helen had taught her how to survive the stresses of the job, which, because of its direct link with the people, was "*nakaka*-high blood *talaga*." Fascinatedly listening, fashion czar Pitoy Moreno, Ruy's cousin, agreed: "*Ang* barangay captain *talaga ang taga-sala ng lahat ng problema ng bayan*." A most accurate description of an unsung job.

Dear Ms President

LETTER FROM MINDANAO

Carolyn O. Arguillas

This is not my personal letter.

This is a compilation of notes sent you by children evacuees in Parang, Maguindanao who met with your peace emissary, Presidential Assistant for Southern Mindanao Jesus Dureza last Wednesday and who sent you cards they made themselves—the drawings and messages you, as a mother, and as President—surely cannot ignore?

(I hope Dureza has given you the cards.)

The drawings themselves are messages: House. School. Children playing. Their "pre-war" world. Their dream world. Their limited concept of "peace."

Mababaw lang po ang kahilingan ng mga bata. Hindi po posisyon sa inyong gabinete. Hindi rin po pera. Makauwi lang po sa kanilang barangay para makapag-aral silang muli. Isang taon na silang hindi nakapag-aral.

Mahirap po bang ibigay 'yan?

Sabi ni Leo, *isang batang bakwit:* "Dear Mrs. President, *gusto po kaming makabalik sa aming lugar upang makapag-aral ng mabuti para makasuporta sa iyo, hirap na hirap na po kami*."

"Dear Mrs. President, *natatakot kami sa putukan, ang gusto namin matapos na ang gyera para makabalik na kami*," sabi ni Jaina.

Badria Burjan, 9, wanted to deliver not just a card: She told Dureza: "*Sabihin ninyo kay Presidente...sana'y matapos na ang gyera para makauwi kami sa aming lugar, para makapag-aral na kami mabuti at saka po para makatrabaho kami*."

Her cousin, Monaira, said: "*Para sa akin po, ang gusto ko po ay mawala na ang gyera sa aming lugar dahil paano na po ang aming kinabukasan kung palagi lang gyera?*"

And here is the letter of Kids for Peace founder Rosan Aliya "Iya" Agbon, written Jan. 22, your first day in Malacañang.

"When we met you at the Cotabato airport last year for your visit to the evacuation centers in Central Mindanao, you were still the Vice President. Now, you are the President, the highest and most powerful position in the country. You are there in Malacañang through the power of the Filipino people, through a peaceful process. One of the lessons I remember from my Religion classes before is that power can be used for the good of all; sadly, it can be abused as well. In the Kids for Peace' psychosocial program at the evacuation centers, we heard horror stories from the children. It made me think about the inhumanity that abuse of power can bring. No one can forget the chilling reality of the war in Mindanao. No one should forget what it meant to the innocent children, mostly younger than I am (I am now 13). By the way, Madam President, a lot of them are still at the evacuation centers. I am not sure if a new president means renewed hope for them. Now that the crisis is over, maybe it is best to refocus attention on them again. I, as a Mindanaoan and as a child peace advocate agree with those who insist that the military solution did not and never will bring peace. I have witnessed child-evacuees draw the different ammunitions they have seen. You saw the pitiful sights in the evacuation centers. You saw the innocent victims of the war that once ravaged Mindanao. These are not images of peace. You seem to me an advocate of peace. You became a President through peaceful means. You are a mother yourself and I know that you feel for these children. It is my fervent hope then that your government will never resort to the military option. The child-evacuees have suffered enough. Please do not ever declare war in Mindanao. Thank you and God bless."

For the sake of the children, Ms President, go beyond your motherhood statements of all-out peace.

Act now. Don't wait for more children to die in the evacuation centers!

* * *

Sixteen days.

Half a month since thousands of war refugees in Mindanao shed tears of joy thinking that with the *Berdugo ng Moro* gone and a new President promising an "all-out peace" campaign, they can now go home.

For a number, it's been nearly 11 months since they fled their villages.

Sixteen days. The promised ceasefire is still a promise.

Oh sure, informal talks have been held, with no less than the President's emissary, Dureza, meeting with the emissaries of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) last Wednesday in Cotabato City to "extend symbolically the hand of peace and the message of peace from the President."

"We have just received the message of peace from the President and we welcome it," lawyer Lanang Ali, a member of the now disbanded MILF peace panel, said.

"At this point in time, we are not talking about the negotiation yet or what should be discussed but what is important now is how to resume the peace process," Ali said.

"We should be patient and we should not expect dramatic results immediately," Dureza said.

No one expects dramatic results this soon.

But try telling the evacuees "be patient."

Try telling the children that.

How long does it take to decide to declare a cessation of hostilities?

Without a ceasefire, it would be naive to expect the evacuees would return home and government, with its huge budget deficit, cannot afford to feed them in the evacuation centers.

No one expects dramatic results in the negotiations proper at this point. No one.

But Ms President, and this is where you're supposed to be good at: set a timetable, set into motion the return-to-the-village program.

Declare the ceasefire this week (the MILF said they will reciprocate); assure the evacuees government agencies will work doubly hard within one month to check how many can immediately return home, how many villages will need to be checked for unexploded bombs, how many will have to wait for a few more days while huts are being constructed (get the confiscated lumber from the DENR offices within and near Central Mindanao, invite Habitat, your soldiers and even policemen, students, volunteers, the business sector, to help construct the houses, etc..

Let the evacuees know you are doing something as President, things you failed to do as social welfare secretary.

And don't name peace panel members without consulting various sectors in Mindanao.

Peace panel membership should not be made part of the "spoils of war."

* * *

LETTER FROM DADDY: Those interested in reading the 10-page letter of President Diosdado Macapagal to his daughter Gloria on her 18th birthday (PDI page 1 yesterday), surf www.iligan.nu, Iligan City's homepage. INQUIRER correspondent Bobby Timonera is the webmaster.

Where are our fresh horses?

COMMENTARY

Dean Jeorge Bocobo

OLD NAGS, in the form of the usual oily *trapos* and recycled bureaucrats, will not redeem the new President's promise to bring in a new generation of leaders. The same old cast of characters will not be able to help her pull the nation out of the deep ravine into which Erap drove the jeep of state. She will need the strong shoulders and keen minds of fresh horses to inspire and lead the nation out of that wilderness and into a new era of good governance and strong growth.

So far, the choices she has made have been a mixed bag. The division of spoils going on among the victors is unfortunate but unavoidable, given her ascension to the presidency on the wings of a multi-sectoral coalition of traditional and non-traditional forces. But she must continue to display a willingness to listen, to be flexible, and to slowly but surely, establish her own agenda and direction for the nation.

The character of the team she assembles around her will determine whether the mandate given to her by history can indeed be used to galvanize all of the people to help her rebuild the nation. As an economist President, she bears the terrible burden of the people's high expectation that she can save us from the ravages of a devastated economy and a fractious politics. Only by harnessing the right people to share that burden, and not merely climb on her back to power, can she fulfill the bright promise of her youthful presidency, to which the baton of leadership has clearly passed from one generation to the next.

Her early appointment of the voluble and energetic Dick Gordon to head the Department of Tourism, provided at least one counter-beat to the otherwise depressing and lachrymose theme of uninspired choices in other major departments. Reports from DOT employees say that Gordon has wasted no time at all in starting up the machinery at the DOT to refresh the country's image after the severe battering it took during the Erap era. If Gordon can use the sis-boom-bah style of inspirational leadership that made him such a success at Subic Bay, to likewise fire up the troops at the DOT, we may be in for a welcome flood of eager new tourists and renewed investment in the country's tourism infrastructure. More importantly, his derring-do can help revive that much needed feeling of pride and confidence in the Filipino that all but vanished in the limping, slurring incoherence of the Erap era.

The President's reappointment of Mar Roxas to the Department of Trade and Industry was likewise an affirmation of the country's need for young and energetic leadership even as the President struggles with the old guard on issues of continuity and stability. With a reserved demeanor and a low-key style, he hopefully represents deep waters. Even before she ascended to the presidency, Roxas was already sounding the clarion call for Filipinos to take up the challenges of a new global economy, premised on the ethereal estates of intellectual property, technological innovation and international business competitiveness. He must carry out the President's call to make information and computer technology an engine for the country's growth. Significant new opportunities lie beyond the traditional factory processing and assembly of semiconductor and electronics products. Among these are telecommunications services, mobile wireless, international call centers, software development and a whole range of scientific and technical support services that the Philippines is poised to take a big part in. Much also depends on the contentious issues surrounding globalization and world trade.

Even more important in some ways than the DTI, is the post at the Department of Agriculture, which remains tantalizingly unfilled. Aside from the telecommunications industry, it was agriculture that accounted for most of the growth in the economy during Erap's last year in office. Now whether this was due to favorable weather or Ed Angara's leadership is hard to say, since the shortness of his incumbency precluded any objective evaluation. To be fair, both factors may be credited. Angara's theme of modernizing the sector deserves to be continued and vastly expanded to make it impervious to the weather, both meteorological and political. But his accusation that the administration has put a low priority on agriculture may be just the opening shot of the coming election season, or a pitch for the quick appointment of protégés and allies already in place. I hope that the new President won't be spooked into retaining Erap era personnel, and that the time she is taking reflects the care and solicitude with which she wants to make these critical choices.

Some choices for the DA already bruited about in media have been underwhelming, being merely experienced politicians or able bureaucrats. But I did meet at least one interesting "dark horse" underdog candidate for the post during Kompil II's victory celebration in the person of Mr. Cito Lorenzo, a young, visionary agribusiness executive who could do for Agriculture what Roxas promises in Industry and Gordon does in Tourism. Dignified jobs and competitive, sustainable enterprises to harness the industriousness of our farmers and peasants is the only way to guarantee their viability in feeding the nation and fueling the engines of growth. There may be other deserving candidates, as Mr. Lorenzo modestly admits. The president faces a similar challenge in filling posts at the Departments of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources, where new blood is also needed.

At the heart of her hard task, is the need for a reformed work ethic for the nation and the government. Against the patronage systems of the past, we must build a smart new culture of merit, earnest work and honest toil, which is what her well-remembered and much-esteemed father gave with his own life and stewardship of the nation's future.

International news are as important as local news

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THE VALUE the Inquirer gives to significant events in other parts of the world was the subject of Michael Mirasol's e-mail to the newspaper.

He wrote: "After the horrific details of the destruction wrought by the recent Indian earthquake, how could you not have one single online article or editorial on this tragic and heartbreaking event? It makes all of our local political pettiness seem insignificant."

"Twenty thousand people are confirmed dead and you guys can't even spare ONE WORD. You guys seem to want to pursue controversy and, in the process, sacrifice the importance of news events that happen everywhere and not just here. Tsk. Tsk."

By way of background, the western part of India was hit last Jan. 26 by a 7.9 magnitude earthquake. The Indian authorities have predicted the death toll from the tragedy could go as high as 200,000. Rescue efforts have been hampered by lack of equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers and generators that can provide electricity for night time work.

The Inquirer first reported the killer earthquake in its World Section on Jan. 28. This was followed by news about the death toll in the same section in the Jan. 29 and 30 issues. The closest the event got front-page treatment was on Jan. 29 at the "What's Inside" ear at the right hand top portion which read "Quake deaths soar to 15,000."

With regard to the newspaper's on-line version, the earthquake was reported in its "Breaking News" section on Jan. 27. Understandably, the websites of the major international cable networks, such as, CNN, CNBC and BBC, gave the event prominent and continuing treatment.

Overshadowed

When informed about the complaint, the editor in chief readily conceded the validity of the reader's observation. "Yes, he is right," she said, "we should have reported that disaster at the front page. An incident of that magnitude should have been brought to the readers' attention immediately."

She explained that on the day of the earthquake there were other equally important events that happened in the country. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo signed into law the Solid Waste Management Act, the first in her administration. The Cabinet positions were slowly being filled up. Reports of coup plans by some elements in the military were in the air.

Without denigrating the significance of the earthquake in India, the editor in chief felt the people's hunger for news about the activities of the recently installed administration should first be satisfied.

The public's eyes and ears were all tuned in the direction of Malacañang awaiting announcements on the composition of her official family and the President's plans on how to get the country get back on its feet after a long political nightmare. Hence, the preferential treatment given to her statements and actions.

If it's any consolation, the earthquake was not completely ignored by the newspaper. The casualty list and rescue efforts were published in the World Section on Jan. 29 and 30. So the readers were not completely kept in the dark about the tragedy.

The editor in chief asked for understanding about the apparent failure of the newspaper to give front-page treatment to the earthquake that hit India. She gave the assurance that newsworthy international events are given the same treatment as important local news.

Knock on wood, let's hope the calamity that hit India will not be repeated elsewhere, especially in our country.

As far as the on-line version of the newspaper is concerned, a copy of the reader's letter has been sent to the website editor for his information and appropriate action.

Choice of word

Marie Therese G. Santos, with address at matetsantos @edsamail.com.ph, was visibly disturbed by the Inquirer's Jan. 30 headline. She wrote:

"Today, the headlines do seem to scream the very fact that I have been trying to deny: the Inquirer is indeed biased. For how do you explain a headline that says "GMA discards Abadia"? Discards! How about "recalls" or "reconsiders"?

"I think it would be foolhardy of you to deny that 'discards' has a negative catch to it, right? And I am sure you have a thesaurus in your offices, the better to look up neutral words for your 'balanced' news."

"I hope you will not scoff at this as a complaint from an Abadia supporter. I do not know the man. I do not care that his appointment was recalled. But that he was *discarded*? Gee, what a way to go huh?"

For starters, the Inquirer would like to assure Santos that copies of the latest version of the thesaurus are available for the use of the editorial staff. That book and dictionaries and stylebooks of prestigious newspapers and magazines in the United States are within reach of the newspaper's editors and desk persons.

The editor in chief could only shake her head when informed about the complaint. It was a mistake, she admitted. On second thought, the more appropriate term should have been "recalled" or "withdrawn." She agreed the word "discards" has an unpleasant ring that does not do justice to the former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

When asked how that errant word got into the picture, she said they (referring to the editorial staff) were rushing to meet the deadline when the question of what word to use for the headline arose. She consented to the use of the word "discards" because it seemed illustrative of the action taken by the President and fitted right into the headline space.

The Inquirer regrets whatever adverse effect the subject headline may have caused Abadia, his friends and loved ones. It did not intend to put Abadia in a bad light, much less make light of his situation.

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*The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The **Readers' Advocate**" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City." Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.*

THEY SAID

Message to Mindanao

"Here is a Muslim congressman who's been appointed to a choice position, a very important position...That is a very strong message to Mindanao."

—Newly appointed Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon on the appointment of Rep. Simeon Datumanong as DPWH secretary

Messages to 11

"What we are trying to achieve with this activity is the replacement of traditional politics, or *trapo*, with genuine, alternative politics, or what we call *guapo*."

—Akbayan spokesperson Vic Rodriguez on encouraging the public to post messages at the Edsa Shrine for the 11 senators who voted against opening of the envelope

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PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE
The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

Exile is a facile solution

WASN'T it only a week ago when we marched to Edsa with the cry "Never again"? We were so insistent on bringing Joseph Estrada and his cronies to court to make them account for their misdeeds and to jail them if they were found guilty. Apparently, the memory of Marcos and his cohorts being allowed exile without first bringing them to justice hurt our sensibilities. We were in no mood to let it happen again.

Yet, it looks like we are going to allow it to happen again.

The idea has been spread around of blood flowing should Erap decide to mount a coup against the newly installed Macapagal administration. Some of her officials are saying it would be better to send Erap and his cronies to exile and thus avoid unnecessary bloodshed. But would they care to inform us as to how the stolen wealth would be divided?

Nakakahiya! If these officials have no balls, then they are certainly unqualified to occupy the positions that were just given them. If they can't understand the importance of making our system of justice work, then they may as well come out in the open and condemn the people to the same injustice they suffered when Marcos was allowed to go scot-free.

What's with them? Aren't they confident that our system of justice will work? Are they afraid that some of the officers in the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police will not back them up in the event that Erap decides to grab back the power? If that's their problem, why don't they ask the soldiers and policemen to pick the leader they believe will be loyal to the administration—and then make the necessary replacements?

We need not be reminded how important it is that we respect the rule of law and that we make them work for the country's good. We might as well admit the fact that we had by our laziness developed the habit of ignoring the law by opting for quick solutions. Isn't that how we became a nation of "fixers"? And now we are trying to "fix" for Erap a graceful exit called "exile." At what cost?

It's hard to confront ourselves. But we need to regain our self-respect. We are obviously mistaken to believe our fight against the evil of graft and corruption was won at Edsa. That was just the foreplay. Now comes the true test of our right consciousness as a people of God: Are we honest enough and diligent enough to live by our laws? It's time we started to realize the consequences of persisting in self-deception.—**ERNESTO K. MAGTOTO, Las Piñas City**

Arrears delayed approval of new loan

THIS is regarding the letter of Alfredo Samson, which appeared in the Dec. 21 issue of the INQUIRER. Samson complained about alleged Social Security System inaction on his salary loan application.

Based on our records, Samson has an unpaid salary loan balance in the amount of P1,071.62. His payments for salary loan were delayed for 32 months, which caused the accumulation of penalty on arrears.

Also, Samson's accumulated penalties on his stock investment loan in the amount of P184.81 caused the deferred release of his stock certificates.

Samson may file his salary loan application upon payment of his balance.

For further details, we request Samson to coordinate with our Backroom Operations at our main branch in Quezon City.—**JOEL P. PALACIOS, assistant vice president, Media Affairs Department, Social Security System, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City**

Warnings of an Edsa III

THIS is regarding an article about Mr. Oscar Lopez's remarks concerning President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which appeared on the front page of your Jan. 30, 2001 issue.

It is understandable, for personal reasons, why the Lopezes had to remain tightlipped about the abuses and corruption during Joseph Estrada's administration. However, where does Lopez get the gall to warn President Macapagal of an Edsa III after the deafening silence of his entire clan during Edsa II. I think it is hypocrisy to make remarks about a possible Edsa III to President Macapagal, especially since they did not even participate in Estrada's ouster. Thanks to those who were at the Edsa Shrine, there is a possibility of a return to good governance. Now even those who took a dormant stand will reap the profit of the labors of those who refused to be hushed.—**RICARDO B. BONCAN, dboncan@quick web. com.ph**

Tatad should stop whining

I HAVE just had about enough of Kit Tatad and his self-righteous indignation about all the "negative" things being said about him. I'll just say this: Mr. Tatad, rightly or wrongly, stood his ground on the non-opening of the 2nd Equitable-PCI Bank envelope during the Senate impeachment trial, fully convinced as he was about rendering a decision based on his understanding of the Constitution and at peace with the dictates of his conscience. Despite being repeatedly asked by his friends, colleagues and almost everyone else to see reason—logical, moral or spiritual—his conviction would not be taken away from him, no matter what the people, already seething in outrage, were saying. *Hindi ka tinatablan noon ng kahit anong salita dahil para sa iyo, nasa tama ka.* How dare he now fulminate about our reaction to what he said and did? How dare he accuse us of being arrogant and self-righteous, when he in fact acted so pompously in the Senate despite our protestations? How dare he accuse us of being vindictive when we call on justice to prevail? He made a decision, live with it. Now stop whining!—**ALLAN VICTORINO, 32 M. Cruz St., Sta. Elena, Marikina City**

LETTERS

NPAs beaten in a real firefight

THIS has reference to the article "NPA says Tarlac rebs victims of overkill." (PDI, 1/17/01) The article said NPA rebels in Tarlac described the Jan. 15 encounter between the NPA and the elements of the 69th Infantry Battalion as an "overkill."

The truth is, the soldiers were much fewer in number when the firefight started. Nineteen soldiers responded to a tip that there were 30 NPA rebels sighted in Barangay San Vicente, San Jose, Tarlac.

Based on military doctrine, we should have fielded at least twice the number of the NPAs to ensure victory. But so as not to lose time, Bravo Company of the 69th IB organized a 19-man team that rushed immediately from their base to Barangay San Vicente.

The NPAs were armed with high powered firearms as evidenced by the recovered armaments: 6 M16s, 1 baby Armalite, 1 grenade launcher 1 M14, 1 AK47 rifle, 1 Thompson submachine gun and 1 carbine. The NPAs returned fire but were defeated by better tactics and effective use of fire and maneuver.

After the initial firefight, two platoons were dispatched to reinforce the troops. The foot soldiers were backed up by a V-150 armored vehicle. But the V-150 could not cross a river. The reinforcements reached the site of the encounter as the troops were mopping up.

It was also reported that "the military and police are trying to impress President Estrada and that's why they killed our comrades in cold blood."

This has no basis at all. Our soldiers are always alert and true to their role of protecting the people.

We understand the big loss suffered by the NPAs. We assure them that the encounter was legitimate. Only, we bested the rebels on tactics and strategy.

If their comrades opted to surrender, they would have been captured. But sad to say, they fought back and lost their lives.—**RODERICK M. PARAYNO, major (INF) PA, 7th Infantry Division spokesperson, 7th Civil Affairs Unit, Philippine Army, Fort Ramon Magsaysay, 3130 Nueva Ecija**

Estrada no longer eligible for reelection

SEVERAL persons are disturbed by talks that Joseph Ejercito Estrada may still run for President in 2004. No less than the Senate president, Nene Pimentel, was quoted as saying that Estrada is qualified to be elected anew as President in 2004.

To end all speculations and calm frayed nerves, Estrada is no longer eligible for reelection.

Section 4, Article VII of the Constitution states in part as follows:

The President and the Vice President shall be elected by direct vote of the people for a term of six years which shall begin at noon on the thirtieth day of June next following the day of the election and shall end at noon of the same date six years thereafter. The President shall not be eligible for any reelection. No person who has succeeded as President and has served as such for more than four years shall be qualified for election to the same office at any time.

Clearly, based on the forgoing, Estrada is not eligible for any reelection. The last line referring to a person "who has succeeded as President," refers only to someone who was not elected President, but became one by virtue of succession, as in the case of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.—**ANTONIO C. PASTELERO, lawyer, Pastelero Law Office, Pasig City**

Such arrogance

THE QUESTION raised by Time's Anthony Spaeth regarding Edsa II which again saw print in Alejandro Lichauco's Jan. 26 essay, is not new. For it was James Abrams Garfield (1831-81), 20th president of the United States, who first dared to publicly state, "Whoever controls the money of a nation, controls that nation." It is, therefore, no longer surprising to hear the likes of Guillermo Luz, executive director of the Makati Business Club saying, "We're the ones who placed her (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) in Malacañang. We are the ones paying taxes to make government work...We should be consulted."

Lichauco, of course, is right in condemning Luz's naked arrogance. But history also tells us that "Arrogance always comes before the fall." The problem is, why should President Macapagal be blamed for Luz's arrogance? This is unfair. It's bad enough that President Macapagal inherited a government targeted for financial warfare by the international financial oligarchy. What is worse is that she isn't getting any help from economists like Lichauco.

For crying out loud, President Macapagal has barely assumed office and she is being accused of "laying the basis of a constitutional coup." Isn't this statement an open invitation to putschists and other paramilitary adventurers to continue with their destabilization efforts?—**ERICK SAN JUAN, Suite 1402, 1st Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City**

Really now, Kit

I RARELY write letters to the editor, but Kit Tatad's recent appearances on TV and the newspapers have provoked me enough. Everytime we see him on TV we either turn off the set or put it on mute. His constant offensive only shows him to be a poor sport. His performances, specially during the impeachment trial, have betrayed his corrupt leanings. Hence please do not blame President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo supporters for the bashing, because the great number of people are angry with what you did (covering up for Estrada); they want justice to be meted on the notorious 11—symbolic of their cry for a more responsive and just society—more than they want Macapagal for president. By claiming he acted on the dictates of his conscience, it is clear he has not examined his conscience properly. (If he believes what he did is right, then he must accept the consequences and bear everything like a man.) He is a disgrace to the Opus Dei and is even now heightening disdain for this institution. While he betrayed the public trust, he claims we should thank him for triggering the public indignation which led to People Power II. Should we thank Judas for betraying Christ? St. Matthew recorded Jesus' words: "Woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!"

When he used a photo of a younger and more presentable Tatad for those shameful full page ads, he only reminded us of his shameful deeds in the past regime. Besides, it smacks of vanity and insincerity, the way matrons pass off earlier photographs for souvenir programs.

No amount of PR will wash away his iniquities. Instead, actions speak louder than words. Repent and be humble as a true Christian, and then join in the healing of our nation.

Or would he continue entertaining us in the unforgettable style of Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Miriam Defensor-Santiago?—**REGALADO TROTA JOSE, 13, 16th St., New Manila, Quezon City**

Good Little President

ONE of the things I like about President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is her appointment of former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa as her Executive Secretary.

Called Mr. Clean, Secretary De Villa is not only incorruptible, humble, reliable but also hard-working and competent.

If President Fidel V. Ramos, a retired general, was a good president, De Villa also a retired general is certain to be a good Little President.

Under Executive Secretary De Villa, we can be sure that nobody can charge him with corruption or incompetence.—**OSCAR R. LANDICHO, Sydney, Australia**

DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM - LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

JOINT DAR-LBP MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 04
Series of 2001

TO : TO ALL CONCERNED OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE DAR AND LBP

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES IN THE PROCESSING AND PAYMENT OF IDLE LANDS WITH SLOPES OF BELOW EIGHTEEN PERCENT (18%)

I. PREFATORY STATEMENT

Under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), all lands with eighteen percent (18%) slope and above, except those already developed, shall be exempt from the coverage of CARP. However, there are lands with slopes of below 18% which are found to be undeveloped/idle and with no history of production at the time of field investigation, hence, suitability to agriculture could not be established.

In order to facilitate the distribution of idle lands described above, the following guidelines are issued.

II. COVERAGE

These guidelines shall cover all land transfer claims involving undeveloped/idle lands **with slopes of below 18%, with no history of production,** and whose valuations are in process and/or not yet covered by Memorandum of Valuation (MOV) as of the date of effectivity of this Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC).

III. PROCESSING AND PAYMENT PROCEDURES

In addition to the usual pre-processing requirements, the following documents shall be included in the Landowner's (LOs) Claim Folder:

a. Certification from Department of Agriculture (DA) that the undeveloped/idle portion (with slope of below 18%) is suitable to agriculture, citing among others, the crop/s that could be economically grown in that particular type of land; and
b. Certification from the Municipal Agrarian Reform Officer (MARO) that there are willing takers of the undeveloped/idle portion of the property (see Annex A).

In the absence of the DA's and the MARO's Certifications, the subject idle land portion shall be segregated and excluded from CARP coverage.

IV. REPEALING CLAUSE

All orders, circulars, rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby revoked, amended, or modified as the case may be.

IV. EFFECTIVITY

This JMC shall take effect (10) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, pursuant to Section 49 of Republic Act No. 6657.

Signed this 16th day of January 2001.

HORACIO R. MORALES, JR.
Secretary
Department of Agrarian Reform

MARGARITO B. TEVES
President and CEO
Land Bank of the Philippines

February 5, 2001 – Inquirer

Fidelity to the Constitution

COMMENTARY

Fr. Patrick Riordan, S.J.

WAS the succession of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo constitutional? The doubt arises because President Joseph Estrada did not die, he was not removed from office by the impeachment court and he did not resign. Furthermore, neither he nor a majority of the members of the Cabinet declared his incapacity, another possibility provided for in the Constitution.

The legal door to the succession by President Macapagal was opened by the Supreme Court, which declared the position of president vacant. In doing this it appealed, not to any article of the Constitution, but to the welfare of the people: *Salus populi est suprema lex* (The well-being of the people is the highest law). Was this constitutional?

It must be admitted that this was extra-constitutional, in the sense that the process followed was not actually foreseen by the Constitution. However, extra-constitutional does not necessarily mean unconstitutional. The extra-constitutional nature of the procedure followed shows that the question is a valid one. It remains to be seen what judgment the Supreme Court would give on a challenge, but the following seem to be the relevant considerations:

The Supreme Court *en banc* declared the position of president vacant. Did it have the authority to do so? As the body charged by the Constitution to determine issues of its interpretation, it is indeed entitled to decide on a question such as the vacancy of the position in circumstances unforeseen by the Constitution. Also, the petitioner, then Vice President Macapagal was fully entitled to submit a request to the Court for a decision, since as successor to the office she had appropriate responsibility for the common good.

What persuaded the Supreme Court to declare the presidency vacant? I surmise that a number of arguments together formed the basis for its judgment. First of all the Supreme Court justices noted the de facto situation that Joseph Estrada was without the agencies normally required by the executive for government, namely, a functioning Cabinet, Armed Forces and police force. They noted further that he was not offering his resignation despite his situation of powerlessness. Thirdly, they noted that there was no longer a functioning Cabinet in existence, a majority of whose members might declare the President unable to discharge the functions and duties of his office. Fourthly, they reflected on the fact that the President had been deprived of popular support.

But beyond these elements of the situation, the Court considered the argument of the protesting citizen body and of the other major players that the institutions put in place under the Constitution for dealing with a criminal president had been frustrated in their function. It was fidelity to the Constitution which had motivated people to accept the appropriateness of the impeachment process. The whole country wanted to have answers to simple questions: Was Joseph Estrada fit to hold the office of president? Had he betrayed the trust of the people? Had he acted against the Constitution? Had he been involved in criminal or corrupt activities? The legal instruments of impeachment were expected to deliver answers to these questions. But instead it appeared as if those legal instruments were allowed to have a life of their own, and to function regardless of their subordination to the practical purpose set for them, namely, the accountability of public officers to the people. The purpose of the law was being frustrated by an exaggerated scrupulosity about the rules of impeachment. The Supreme Court determined by its judgment that the values articulated in the Constitution were to he upheld.

I surmise further that it was not primarily fear of bloody confrontation which lay behind the justices' appeal to the welfare of the people. It was concern that the values, ideals and aspirations articulated in the Constitution should be vindicated. As the Preamble of the Constitution so eloquently puts it:

"We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society, and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality and peace, ordain and promulgate this Constitution."

It was entirely consistent with the spirit and intention of the Constitution that the Supreme Court made its declaration. It had considered the purposes intended in the Constitution, the difficulties associated with the foreseen arrangements for the transfer of office, and the de facto situation of the powerlessness of President Estrada. The effect of its action is not to change any element of the Constitution, but to put in place an administration that is more likely to uphold and implement the intentions expressed in it. The reliance on an extra-constitutional process for removing the President after the other options had been frustrated was not unconstitutional, but was an exercise by the relevant constitutionally established authority to ensure that the purpose of the Constitution, which is the common good, would be achieved.

Fr. Patrick Riordan, S.J., is the author of "A Politics of the Common Good," a professor of social philosophy at Milltown Park in Dublin, Ireland, and currently a visiting professor at the Ateneo de Naga University.

The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

WITH A DAY to go before the prime ministerial election in Israel, Prime Minister Ehud Barak loses no time wooing voters in the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shemona. Barak is lagging behind his right-wing challenger Ariel Sharon in opinion polls. REUTERS

Barak promises to work toward refugee formula

ABU DHABI—Israel's caretaker prime minister, Ehud Barak, promised Saturday to work toward a compromise on the problem of Palestinians who fled or were driven from their homes when Israel was created in 1948 if he is reelected.

In an interview broadcast on satellite television here, Barak said "the right of return of the 1948 refugees is not acceptable to Iraelis. But, if I am elected, I will try to reach a compromise solution with the Palestinians."

Barak is not expected to be re-elected in Tuesday's vote for prime minister, with hardline right-wing candidate Ariel Sharon ahead by around 20 percentage points in opinion polls.

The fate of the refugees, estimated to number around 3.7 million, and the future of Israel-occupied east Jerusalem have been the two most intractable issues preventing Israel and the Palestinians from reaching a peace accord.

"I do not believe that Israel can ever permit the return of the Palestinians... There are red lines," Barak said.

"Even so, and despite all the problems, we are open to finding a compromise solution. That requires an effort not only on our part but also on the part of the Palestinians."

The Palestinian Authority has consistently demanded that Israel honor United Nations General Assembly resolution 194, which recognizes the right of the refugees to return.

Separately, Barak issued a plea to Arab Israelis to vote for him.

That community, which represents about 13 percent of the electorate, backed him massively in 1999, helping propel him to a landslide victory over right-wing premier Benjamin Netanyahu.

This time round, however, Barak has been faced with a call from that quarter to boycott the election altogether, as he has been blamed for what they see as the violent repression of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, that broke out in September.

He is also blamed for the deaths of 13 Arab Israelis, killed by Israeli police during October demonstrations in support of the Palestinians.

Barak called those deaths a "great tragedy," saying the Israeli police should not have broken up the demonstration with force.

Adding that an investigation has been opened into the incident, he said "we will do our best to avoid such a tragedy occurring in the future."

On the election, he said "Arab Israelis should compare between a (potential) government of the right, which works against peace" and one that "works for peace and that, I think, is more favorable to them."

"But those who abstain from voting, that signifies that they are (effectively) voting for Sharon who, I think, is not in favor of peace.

"I am convinced and I hope to win, which is good for peace, for Israel and for the region." *AFP*

4 soldiers killed in Irian Jaya clash

JAKARTA—Four soldiers of Indonesia's elite special forces and a separatist rebel were killed in fighting in Indonesia's restive Irian Jaya province, media reports said Sunday.

The death toll was the worst since a series of skirmishes in December in which at least 20 people died.

The state Antara news agency said the latest clash occurred on Saturday, when rebels launched a surprise attack on a military outpost in Betaf, a town near the border with Papua New Guinea, about 4,000 km northeast of Jakarta.

The report said the guerrillas tortured and then killed the four members of Kopassus, the US-trained special forces brigade accused of numerous human rights abuses in Irian Jaya and other violence-wracked regions.

Irian Jaya, also known as West Papua, is located on the western half of New Guinea island. Rebels of the Free Papua Movement have been waging a war of independence since Indonesia occupied the former Dutch colony in 1963. *AP*

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Real estate czars blamed for deaths in earthquake

AHMEDABAD, India—When they churned out dreams for Gujarat's middle class, India's real estate czars were king: they drove in swank cars, lived in posh penthouses, and made millions.

Then, many of their lofty buildings turned into rubble in the Jan. 26 earthquake, while other, much older houses were shaken but not damaged.

Within hours, the people who transformed this merchant city into a throbbing metropolis went into hiding. Criminal complaints were lodged against them. Many apartment dwellers wanted to assault them, saying bad buildings had increased the toll from India's worst earthquake.

Officials in Gujarat, the state where the quake's epicenter was located, said the confirmed death toll stood at 16,403 as of Saturday. It was expected to jump Monday when earthmovers and bulldozers clear the ruins of the four- and five-story apartment blocks that have risen in this booming industrialized state in recent years.

By Sunday, complaints against 21 construction companies had been lodged with police in Ahmedabad, the state's commercial capital, accusing the owners and structural engineers of murder and fraud.

Experts said greedy construction companies made a practice of using poor material, flouted architectural norms and were part of a cycle of corruption and inefficiency that also involves government officials and politicians.

"The real estate sector is the largest cesspool of corruption in India, because it involves the largest costs," top architect Ravindra Vasavada told The Associated Press.

"The chain is: builder, officials, politicians. The riches go right up to the top, to the decision-makers," Vasavada said. "For politicians, it is a wonderful, permanent bank." *AP*

TFIRST TIMER REUTERS

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il (left), seen meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Pyongyang in this July 2000 file photo, will make his first visit to Russia in April, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported Feb. 4.

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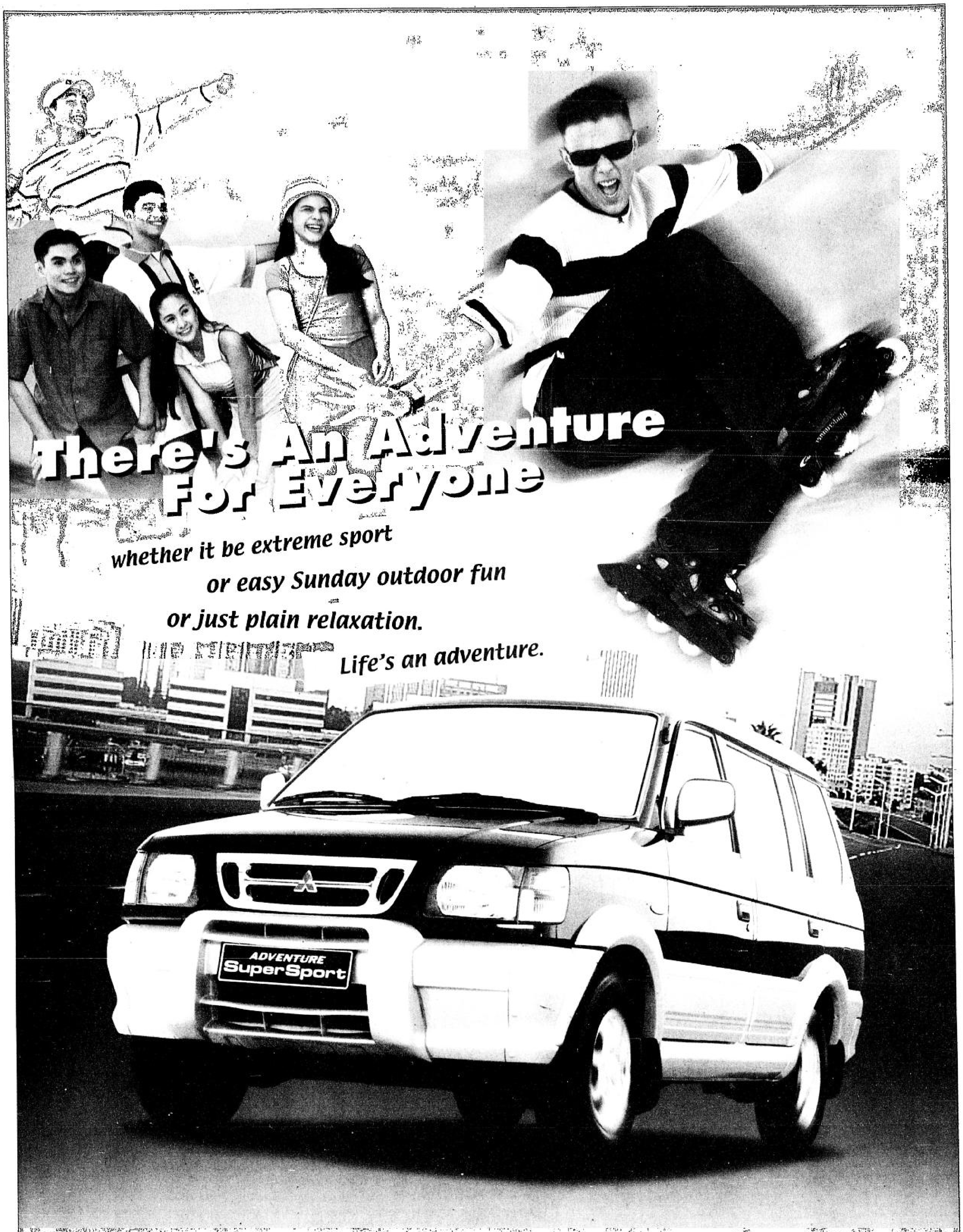
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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

At age 104, Maria grows three new teeth

MOSCOW—Maria Vasilieva is delighted that at the tender age of 104, she will at last be able to munch her favorite ginger cookies—after growing three new teeth. Russia's RIA news agency said Vasilieva had become the oldest person to grow new teeth, baffling doctors in the remote southern region of Tatarstan, where she lives alone in a small village tending a garden and raising poultry. RIA quoted health officials as saying it was the first known case of anyone older than 100 growing new teeth. "She is just happy about it, saying she now has teeth to chew ginger biscuits. Local dentists are studying the exceedingly rare event," RIA said. *Reuters*

ONDARRU
EA
BASAURI

PHOTO PROTEST AP

Relatives of ETA prisoners protest with the inmates' photos in Bilbao, Spain, Feb. 3. Thousands took to the streets in Bilbao to ask the Spanish government to compromise and send Basque prisoners to jails nearer their home in the Basque region of northern Spain.

Colombia president, top rebel talk peace

BOGOTA—Colombian President Andres Pastrana made a surprise trip to a guerrilla enclave on Saturday, shortly after he agreed to meet the country's top rebel boss next week to revive two-year-old peace talks.

Pastrana flew to the Switzerland-sized territory in southern Colombia controlled by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and announced he was extending rebel control of the enclave until Friday.

Earlier, Pastrana said he would meet face to face with FARC top commander Manuel "Sureshot" Marulanda on Thursday to discuss the South American nation's four-decade-old war, which has killed more than 35,000 civilians in the last 10 years.

The rebels broke off peace talks in November accusing Pastrana of not doing enough to crack down on death squads.

Pastrana had upped the stakes in sluggish peace talks on Wednesday calling for an urgent meeting with Marulanda before Sunday, when a deadline for the FARC's 42,000 sq. km demilitarized zone was to expire.

But two days later, Marulanda, the 69-year-old FARC founder, answered that Sunday was too soon to make the necessary security and logistic arrangements, and proposed meeting on Thursday instead.

Pastrana agreed.

"I inform you that I have given instructions to (peace commissioner) Camilo Gomez so that he coordinates our meeting next Thursday," Pastrana wrote in a letter to Marulanda.

The men have met twice in the past, in 1998 and 1999.

Opinion polls show that Colombians are tiring of the FARC's failure to make concessions and want Pastrána—the son of a former president and who ran for office on a peace ticket—to get tough with the guerrillas.

The enclave was first declared off limits to the Army in November 1998 to provide a neutral venue for talks with the FARC, a 17,000-strong peasant Army which wants sweeping socialist demands in this Andean nation of 40 million. *Reuters*

Body parts scam scares organ donors

LONDON—Britain ordered an emergency doctors' summit on Sunday because of fears that a scandal over a doctor who hoarded children's body parts has caused a downturn in organs being donated for transplant.

Leading transplant hospital the Royal Brompton, in London, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, central England, said they had been unable to perform transplants for 10 days due to the shortage.

There were reports of at least two children in desperate need of transplants who may die because of the downturn.

Doctors say parents are reluctant for organs to be taken from their dead children for transplant because of the revelation this week that Dutch pathologist Dick van Velzen stockpiled thousands of children's organs.

In many cases, Van Velzen took the body parts from dead children at Alder Hey hospital in Liverpool, northwest England, without the explicit permission of parents.

In the wake of the report, dozens of hospitals around the country admitted they too had storerooms full of unused organs.

Health Minister Alan Milburn called transplant experts together for an urgent meeting to find a way of restoring public confidence in the organ donation system.

"Eight million people carry organ donor cards in Britain and they need to have full confidence that they will be treated with dignity and respect at all time," Milburn said. *AFP*

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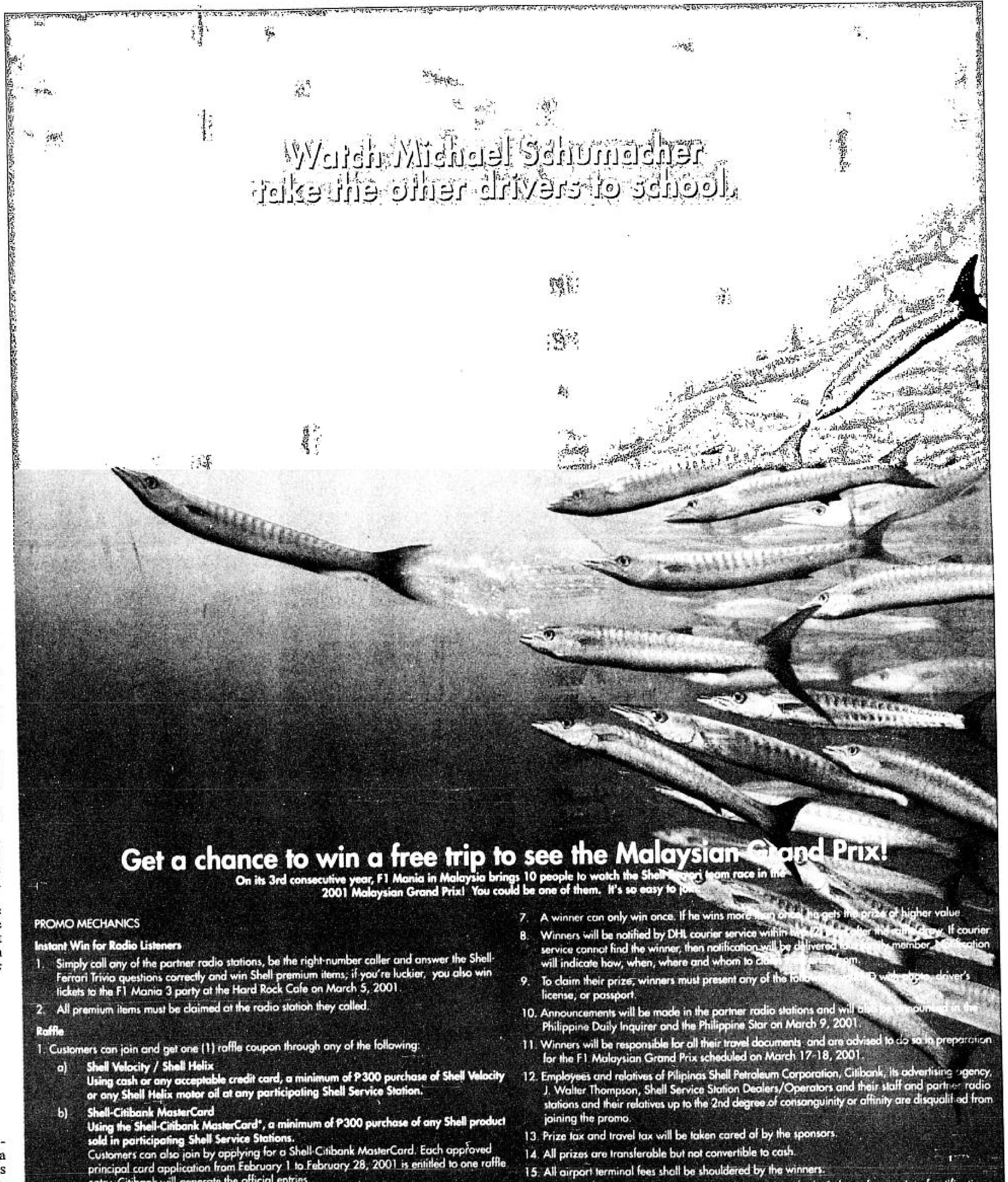
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Using the Shell-Citibank MasterCard*, a minimum of P300 purchase of any Shell product sold in participating Shell Service Stations.
Customers can also join by applying for a Shell-Citibank MasterCard. Each approved principal card application from February 1 to February 28, 2001 is entitled to one raffle entry. Citibank will generate the official entries.
* Every P300 purchase of Shell Velocity or Shell Helix using the Shell-Citibank MasterCard entitles you to one (1) raffle coupon.
2. Write your name, address, telephone number/s and signature on the raffle coupon and drop in dropboxes at participating Shell Service Stations.
3. Deadline for submission of entries is on February 28, 2001 for Luzon and February 26, 2001 for Visayas and Mindanao.
4. Ten (10) lucky winners will be drawn: 6 from Luzon, 2 from Visayas and Mindanao and 2 from Shell-Citibank MasterCard approved applicants. There will also be 30 winners of consolation prizes such as original Ferrari merchandise (10 shirts, 10 caps & 10 bags).
5. Draw date for all qualified entries is on March 5, 2001 at the Hard Rock Cafe, Makati.
6. Grand prize will include a round-trip economy ticket to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, ticket to the F1 race, hotel accommodation for 4 days/3 nights, airport transfer & transportation to and from the Sepang Circuit.
7. A winner can only win once. If he wins more than once, he gets the prize of higher value.
8. Winners will be notified by DHL courier service within two (2) days after the raffle draw. If courier service cannot find the winner, then notification will be delivered to a family member. Notification will indicate how, when, where and whom to claim the prize from.
9. To claim their prize, winners must present any of the following valid ID with photo: driver's license, or passport.
10. Announcements will be made in the partner radio stations and will also be announced in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Philippine Star on March 9, 2001.
11. Winners will be responsible for all their travel documents and are advised to do so in preparation for the F1 Malaysian Grand Prix scheduled on March 17-18, 2001.
12. Employees and relatives of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, Citibank, its advertising agency, J. Walter Thompson, Shell Service Station Dealers/Operators and their staff and partner radio stations and their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.
13. Prize tax and travel tax will be taken cared of by the sponsors.
14. All prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
15. All airport terminal fees shall be shouldered by the winners.
16. Winners of consolation prizes may claim their prizes until 60 days after receipt of notification letter.
17. Winners of the grand draw must claim their prizes immediately, in time for the F1 races in Malaysia. They may not claim their prizes after the event.
18. Winners from Visayas and Mindanao will enjoy free airfare to and from Manila. Accommodations for one (1) night will also be provided for, prior to departure to and upon arrival from Malaysia.
19. Grand draw will be witnessed by a DTI representative.
20. Luzon winners may claim their prizes from the Retail Fuels & Brand Department, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation at Shellhouse, 156 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City with telephone no. (02) 816-6501. Visayas and Mindanao winners may claim their prizes from the Shell installations/depots located in their area indicated in the notice.
21. Promo runs from February 1 to February 28, 2001 in Luzon and February 1 to February 26, 2001 in Visayas, and Mindanao.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Dear Madame President

First of all, our heartfelt congratulations to you in becoming our country's president. The recent events and the peaceful transition of the government through EDSA II People's Power made us prouder to be Filipinos. We are once again admired in awe, as a people, by the whole world.

It is now the time for unity and healing, to bring our fragmented nation together. With this in mind, we have arrived at the conclusion that you as president, should appoint a vice-president who will wholeheartedly work with you to achieve your high goals for our beloved country and deliver the Philippines to economic prosperity and growth.

You should appoint a trustworthy person we can believe in. Someday who will not sacrifice his ideals and conviction for his own selfish interests and desires. Someone whose only aim is to elevate the life of every Filipino and put back the Philippines in the world map.

The hard work is just beginning. It is in this regard that we, the undersigned Filipinos living in the United States who prayed for you, supported you and your efforts to oust Joseph Estrada would like to nominate a dedicated public servant, **SENATOR AQUILINO "NENE" PIMENTEL** to the position of Vice-President for the following reasons:

1. Nene Pimentel's integrity is beyond reproach. His character is unquestionable. A very credible leader will boost the economy and hasten the healing process. As Senate President, he never wavered in his personal convictions. He did not sacrifice his ideals and principles for any selfish motives and interests.
2. Nene fought for human rights and democracy, He bravely criticized the Marcos dictatorship when dissent was not allowed.He was imprisoned a few times by leading the opposition against Marcos. Together with Ninoy Aquino and other anti-Marcos leaders, he endured pain and suffering while in prison to prove his sincerity and love for the country.
3. He has a wide experience in government. He served as delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, elected Mayor of Cagayan de Oro, served with highest distinction in the Senate where he principally authored landmark laws like the Local Government Code which provided more autonomy to local government.
4. Coming from Mindanao, Nene is most capable of reaching out to our Muslim brothers and sisters. His credibility and persona will help attain a just, true and lasting peace in Mindanao.
5. Nene has the capability of helping the country attract more investors to create new jobs for our people. He will continuously bat for development in the countryside.
6. He will be a perfect partner to Her Excellency with his work attitude, credibility, independent mind and intelligence. His expertise in government will be an advantage because he can provide the advice that Her Excellency might seek from time to time.

Madame President, Nene Pimentel will be an asset to your administration as Vice-President. We urge you to appoint Senator Pimentel as Vice-President.

ATTY. ROMEO ALVIDERA
President, Cagayanons of Northern California

ENGR. RUDY NIERE
President, Phil-American Society of Architects

SAM L. ICALINA
Commissioner for Veteran Affairs, Carson City, Ca

DANNY LAMILA
Ninoy Aquino Movement, L.A. Ca

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ATTY. ELLIE EMBISAN
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NATHAN INVENTOR
Sun-Aganon of America

WINSTON PUNLA
CEO Punla & Associates

RAMON FRANCO
Ninoy Aquino Movement

ADVT

New Congo president calls on Belgium for total support

BRUSSELS—New Congolese President Joseph Kabila said on Saturday his government was already seeking to unify the vast country and called on Belgium for its total support in bringing peace to war-torn central Africa.

In a brief news conference after a day meeting leaders of former colonial power Belgium, Kabila said he was already taking concrete steps toward peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Not in the days to come—we have already started. At government level our teams have started to work on how to organize future meetings with everyone concerned with the problems of the Democratic Republic of Congo," he said.

Asked what he expected from Belgium, he replied: "In the short term, it's their total support for initiatives linked to regaining peace in the Great Lakes region, not just in the Democratic Republic of Congo."

Uganda and Rwanda are supporting rebels fighting the Congolese government, which in turn is backed by forces from Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola in a conflict which has rocked the central African region.

Kabila, who took power after his father was assassinated last month, was on the final day of his first foreign tour as president which also took him to Paris, Washington and the United Nations' headquarters in New York

Belgium's Foreign Minister Louis Michel, who had a one-on-one meeting with Kabila, said the day had been "fruitful". Kabila said he agreed

"We have had extremely frank, enlightening discussions which have brought some useful insights which could permit us to establish a constructive relationship for the future," Michel told the news conference.

"I was very impressed by the openness of Kabila and his team and by their commitment to peace and to a peaceful solution for the Congo and the region," he added.

Later, Michel told reporters this did not mean he considered Kabila to have political legitimacy.

"Today no one has real legitimacy in the Congo. But circumstances have put in place a young president who... says he wants openness," Michel said.

Michel declined to comment on whether Kabila would set preconditions before entering peace talks.

Reuters

Clintons pay for gifts they chose to keep

WASHINGTON—Former US President Bill Clinton and Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton will pay for nearly $86,000 worth of gifts they chose to keep last year, his office said, seeking to remove the whiff of impropriety that clouded their exit from the White House.

The payback amounts to about half the value of the gifts Clinton and his wife reported they intended to keep when he left office on Jan. 20. An aide to Ms Clinton, the new Democratic senator from New York, said on Friday the reimbursement was also an attempt to stem criticism that has surrounded her first weeks on Capitol Hill.

The aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, emphasized that both the former president and his wife would pay for the gifts.

Earlier Friday, Clinton announced that the government would be billed for only half the $600,000 annual rent on a Manhattan office. The aide said that, too, was intended to deflect criticism.

The gifts include $7,375 worth of furniture received from Denise Rich, the ex-wife of a fugitive financier pardoned by Clinton on his last day in office—a move that has prompted a congressional investigation.

"As have other presidents and their families before us, we received gifts over the course of our eight years in the White House and followed all of the gift rules," Clinton said in a statement faxed to news agencies by his chief of staff, Karen Tramontano.

While we gave the vast majority of gifts we received to the National Archives, we reported those gifts that we were keeping," the statement said. "To eliminate even the slightest question, we are taking the step of paying for gifts given to us in 2000."

AP

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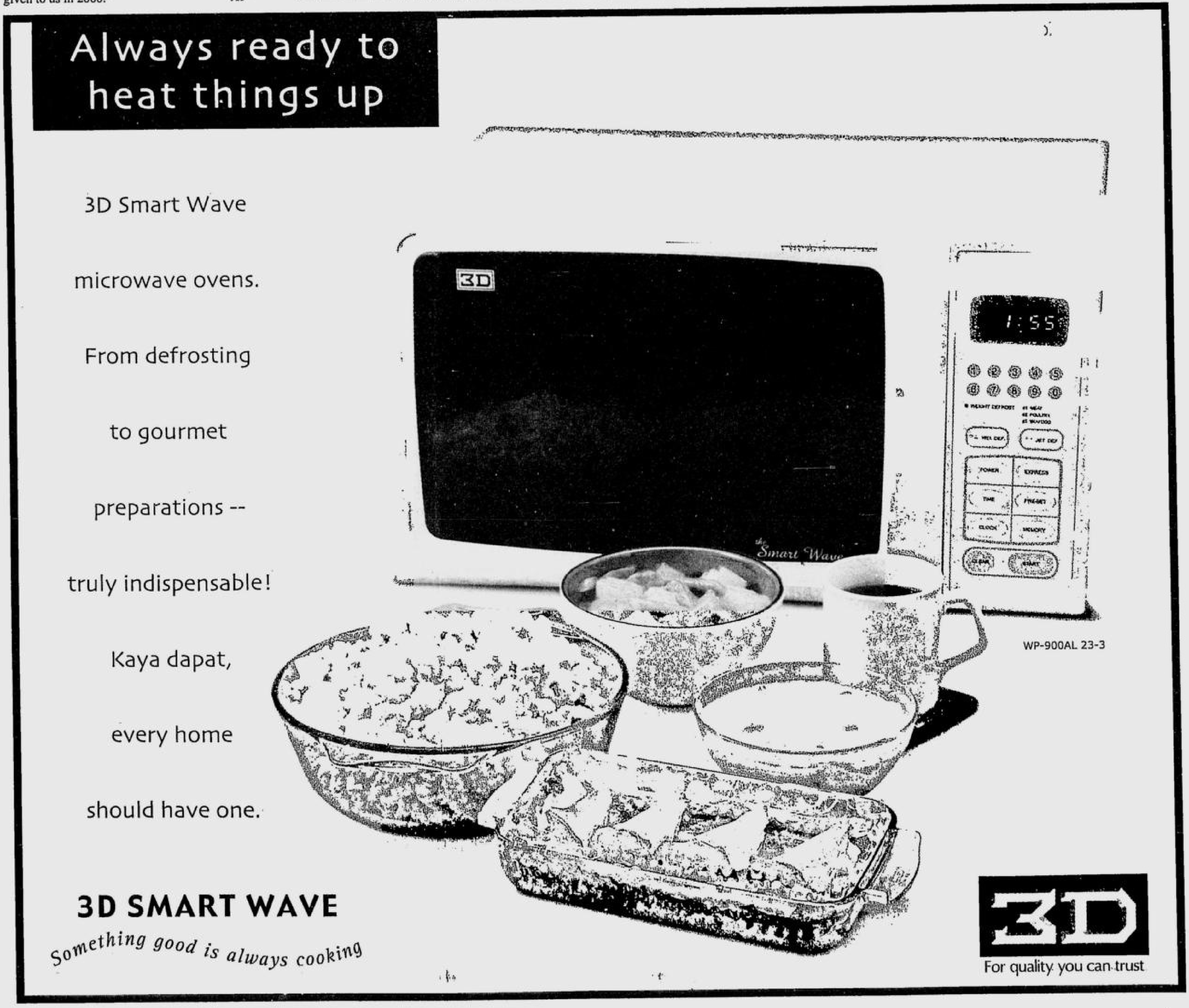
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GMA conquers Davide country

By Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

PRESIDENT Gloria, who's second only in popularity to Chief Justice Hilario Davide according to surveys, conquers Barangay Hipodromo, a Davide country. TONEE DESPOJO

CEBU CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo may not be as popular as Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. in Metro Manila, but the President was mobbed like a "princess" in the Chief Justice's hometown.

Urban poor residents swarmed around Ms Macapagal Saturday when she went to Barangay Hipodromo to distribute land titles and to consult with representatives of multi-sectoral groups.

Ms Macapagal's visit to Cebu Saturday was her first in the Visayas since she took her oath as President, administered by Davide before thousands who gathered at Edsa at noon of Jan. 20, at the end of the four-day People Power 2 that forced President Joseph Estrada out of Malacañang.

On Saturday, residents of Hipodromo, one of the city's poorest barangays, elbowed each other for space as they tried to get close to her to catch a glimpse of her or touch her hand.

At the Philippine Councilors' League convention at the Waterfront Hotel where she was a guest speaker, many councilors refused to enter the grand ballroom because they wanted to be the first to shake Ms Macapagal's hands upon her arrival.

Stood on chairs

Some even stood on their chairs so they could see the diminutive President enter the ballroom and walk to the stage.

President Macapagal was clearly unperturbed by recent survey results that showed that Davide was more popular than her.

"Well I am not in a popularity contest. I have to do what is right and do my best and let God take care of the rest," she told a news conference at the Mactan Benito Ebuen Airbase yesterday.

Ms Macapagal also shrugged off the results of a Pulse Asia survey indicating that 44 percent of Metro Manila residents think she won't be able to remain as President until 2004, when the unfinished term of Estrada that she is now serving expires.

"Well, that remains to be seen," she said.

Trust rating

The Pulse Asia survey showed that Ms Macapagal's popularity rating went up from negative 44 to positive 14, or a leap of about 58 percentage points.

Still, her net trust rating was lower compared to the 48 percent garnered by Davide and Pimentel's 38 percent.

It was Davide, a Cebuano, who presided over the televised impeachment trial of Estrada for 24 days until it was suspended on Jan. 17 when House prosecutors resigned in protest over a Senate decision not to admit as evidence an envelope containing documents on a P3.3 billion bank account allegedly belonging to the ousted President.

The survey, which covered 346 respondents, was conducted on Jan. 26, or six days before People Power 2 ousted President Joseph Estrada.

In her press conference at the Mactan Benito Ebuen Airbase, Ms Macapagal commended the Cebuanos for their "courage" and "bravery" during People Power 2.

Early supporters

"If they have Edsa in Manila, there was also Fuente Osmeña and many other places in Cebu," she said.

The Fuente Osmeña Park was the favorite venue of anti-Estrada protests that began in October and culminated with a victory party to mark Estrada's departure from office.

Ms Macapagal also said Cebu and the Visayas have already been pushing for the need for her to be ready to assume the presidency even before Metro Manila and Luzon saw the need for her to prepare for a transition in government.

The President also reiterated her commitment to programs for the urban poor.

"My first stop from the airport is going to Barangay Hipodromo to be with the urban poor and to fulfill some of the promises of the previous administration," she said.

Ms Macapagal said she could have conducted her meeting with the multi-sectoral groups in a hotel but "would the poor people of Hipodromo be able to go there?"

"So I decided to go to them. And that's why I opt for a consultation mechanism."

During the consultation, Ms Macapagal gave assurances that her administration would push through with the prosecution of Estrada, his cronies and those involved in the plunder of the nation's coffers in past administrations.

The President was addressing one of the concerns of Barug Sugbo, a broad coalition of anti-Estrada groups in Cebu.

Evidence

Ms Macapagal told a crowd of 2,000 that Justice Secretary Hernando Perez has already started gathering evidence and key testimony of witnesses for the prosecution of Estrada.

The prosecution of the former President will continue, "whether he will go on exile or not," Arroyo stressed.

She said she acknowledged the participation of Cebuanos in People Power 2 when they massed at Fuente Osmeña during the four-day uprising that led to the ouster of Estrada.

"I recognize the contribution of Cebu's civil society in the voice of protest at Edsa that is why I vowed to visit Cebu first after everything has returned to normal," she said.

Ms Macapagal said her administration would institutionalize consultation not only with the people in Manila, but also with people in other parts of the country.

She also urged local congressmen to help her address the concerns raised by women's groups and the hearing impaired, saying their problems need legislative action.

Plea of the deaf

A group of the hearing impaired called for exemption from civil service eligibility to be able to seek employment in the state bureaucracy.

Lihok Filipina, a Cebu-based women's group, sought more laws to protect women.

Cebu City Rep. Nancy Cuenco, Raoul del Mar and Rep. Clavel Asas Martinez attended the consultation.

"Help me to become a good president," she told the roaring crowd.

The other concerns raised during the consultation were a stop to corruption and cronyism in the state's political and economic affairs; transparency and accountability in governance; consultations with civil society; the appointment of men of probity and without political biases to the Commission on Elections and clean and honest elections.

Ms Macapagal promised to work with the next Congress to implement the constitutional mandate of giving education the highest allocation because she recognized the need of the education sector for a higher budget.

"I will coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways and the environment department on how to address the concerns pertaining to the water problem of Cebu," she said.

Ms Macapagal said this was one of the most basic needs of society and "I will closely study ways to help Cebu have it." ***With reports from Malou Guanzon-Apalisok and Lino Parone Jr., PDI Visayas Bureau***

A COMMITMENT OF SUPPORT

Her Excellency
GLORIA MACAPAGAL – ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Madame President:

The Mindanao Business Council (MBC), federations of chambers of commerce and industry, and the business and industry community of the Island of Mindanao join the entire Filipino nation in celebrating your Excellency's assumption of the Presidency.

We, in Mindanao, watched with growing and open apprehension the turn of events that led the country's structure of government and economic system to the verge of collapse, even as we witnessed with jubilation the upsurge of the Filipino spirit and the redemption of democracy afterwards at EDSA II.

Today, we look forward to your Excellency's leadership with high hopes and happy hearts because we are confident that peace and prosperity in our Island are among your Excellency's top priorities.

We laud your Excellency's first steps towards the direction of growth for our Island – the appointment of Mindanaoans to your excellency's official family: **Paul G. Dominguez, Presidential Adviser on Regional Development and Philippine Ambassador to Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia; Simeon Datumanong,** ***Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary;*** **Pantaleon Alvarez,** ***Department of Transportation and Communications Secretary;*** **and Jesus Dureza,** ***Presidential Assistant for Eastern Mindanao and Chair of Mindanao Economic Development Council;*** **just as we commend your prudence in the choice of all the other cabinet secretaries and officials who will help you run the affairs of our country.**

These early signs of concern for Mindanao give us hope and confidence that our Island and its people will henceforth play a pivotal role in the growth of our nation.

The business and industry community, together with the people we serve, extend to you our humble yet sincere well-wishes and our commitment to join hands with your Excellency in working for a just and lasting peace and the growth of the political and economic institutions in Mindanao.

We salute you, Madame President

Ms Joji Ilagan Bian
Chairman

Engr. Epimaco M. Galero, Jr
Vice Chair

Mr. Emilio M. Plansay
Trustee

Dr. [illegible] A. Candao
Chairman, Mindanao Fruit Development Council

Mr. Jamil Hamza AT Olermo
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Atty. Claro G. Garcia
President, Caraga Council for Economic Development

Ms Elena U. Haw
Trustee
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Engr. Bienvenido Badelles
Trustee
Northwestern Mindanao

Mr. Arsenio Sebastian
Trustee
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Mr. Alfonso A. Magbanua
Executive Director
Total Reforestation for Economic and Ecological Sustainability, Inc.

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Mr. Antonio R. Santos
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Datumanong: No to helicopter

COTABATO CITY—Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong has asked Congress to realign funds originally intended for the purchase of a brand new helicopter for his office.

Nata Pangarungan, DPWH chief for Central Mindanao, said Public Works Undersecretary Joel Altea had informed him that the department has appropriated P100 million in equipment outlay to purchase an eight-seat helicopter for the secretary's use for provincial trips.

But Datumanong immediately ruled out buying a helicopter, saying he would rather have the fund realigned to purchase dredging barges for the Pasig and Mindanao rivers.

He said he would just travel by commercial plane and by car.

"We should have that realigned for a nobler purpose. What do we do with a helicopter? Why don't you have dredgers instead? I think we need more of that (equipment)," Datumanong said.

Datumanong's driver Marcelo Veluz said his boss even asked him to return to the department's general services' office a Ford Expedition used by former Secretary Gregorio Vigilar.

With almost four decades of public life, Datumanong is known here for his modest lifestyle.

His appointment got the support of several sectors, including the six governors of the Bicol region, led by Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Villafuerte, who passed a resolution supporting Datumanong.

Nash Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 0282 Series of 2001

5TH ASIA PACIFIC CONGRESS OF ENDOSCOPIC SURGERY COMES TO MANILA

February 9 - 11, 2001

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The Philippine Association of Endoscopic Surgeons (PAES), an affiliate of the Philippine College of Surgeons, and the International Federation of Societies of Endoscopic Surgeons, in cooperation with the Endoscopic and Laparoscopic Surgeons of Asia (ELSA) will host the 5th Asia Pacific Congress of Endoscopic Surgery in Metro Manila on February 9 - 11, 2001 at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel. Surgeons of the different surgical subspecialties from the Asia Pacific region (General Surgery, Colorectal, Urology, Orthopedics, Thoraco-Cardio Vascular Surgery, Pediatric, ENT, Neurosurgery) whose work involve the use of all the different endoscopes (laparoscope, thoracoscope, colonoscope, arthroscope, uroscope, ENT scope, ventriculoscope), with participation from surgeons coming from the rest of the world, meet every two years to share their work, discuss controversial and problematic procedures, learn from each other's experience, form friendships, and enjoy each other's company and fellowship. Endoscopic Surgery, also known as Minimally Invasive Surgery, is the current trend in present day surgery and it will be the surgery of the future. This type of surgery requires small incisions and in a number of times require no incision because the endoscope can be inserted through the natural body openings (nose, ears, mouth, anus, vagina, penis). The patient experiences minimal post-op pain and return to previous activity in a very short period of time,

Fifty-one foreign speakers have committed participation in the Plenary Sessions, Specialty Sessions, Panel Discussions, Luncheon and Breakfast Symposia, Poster Sessions, How I Do It Video Sessions and to a Learning Center where instructional videos can be viewed and new instruments can be tried hands-on by the delegates. World reknowned instrument companies will display their latest innovative instruments in the Technical Exhibit Hall, together with other pharmaceutical companies.

The Opening Ceremony will be held on February 9, 2001, 9:00 AM at the ISLA Ballroom.

Early registration is going on at reduced rates. PAES members will be given special rates for belonging to the host organization. The registration fee for local delegates who are PAES members is P1000.00, for non-PAES members P1,500.00 and for specialty sessions (day registration) is P500.00.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Sessions on:

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* Lap Pediatric Surgery
* Lap Colorectal Surgery
* Lap Retroperitoneal Surgery
* Lap Liver Surgery
* VATS
* Management of Benign and Malignant Bile Duct Stones
* Endoscopic Breast Surgery
* Endoscopic Plastic Surgery
* Endoscopic Head and Neck Surgery
* Gynecologic Endoscopy
* Endoscopic Orthopedic Surgery
* Endoscopic Mx. of Esophageal Malignancies
* Lap Surgery for Trauma and Acute Abdomen

Calling all Bedans!!!

The Grand Centennial Homecoming

San Beda College

PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

15 February 2001 (Thursday)
Red and White Ball 2001
- 7:00 P.M.
The NBC Tent, Bonifacio Global City, Makati City

16 February 2001 (Friday)
Ciento! Grand Centennial Concert
- 7:00 P.M.
College Quadrangle and Centennial Plaza.
Featuring the San Beda High School Glee Club

SBC
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17 February 2001 (Saturday)
Grand Centennial Homecoming
Hosted by:
High School Class of 1976
Silver Jubilarians
High School Class of 1951
Golden Jubilarians
- 10:00 A.M.
Bedan Centennial Basketball Game
Covered Court
- 1:30 P.M.
Opening of Sto. Niño Exhibit and Centennial Exhibit
San Beda College
- 4:00 P.M.
Eucharistic Celebration
Abbey Church of Our Lady of Montserrat
- 5:00 P.M.
Registration
St. Maur's Lobby
- 6:00 P.M.
Homecoming Dinner / Program
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Pampanga residents urge flights to Clark

ANGELES CITY—The Resign Estrada Movement of Pampanga (REMP) has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to operate within the 100 days of her presidency regular domestic flights at the Clark International Airport.

"No airport within 100 days, Resign," proclaimed the streamers put up by leaders of the REMP led by the Pinoy Gumising Ka Movement (PGKM).

They are asking Ms Macapagal to open the Clark International Airport to domestic flights within her first 100 days in office.

Ruperto Cruz, PGKM chair, said the main reason Kapampangans supported the move to oust President Joseph Estrada was because of the ousted President's failure to open Clark International Airport even for regular domestic flights.

He said the operation of the airport inside the Clark Special Economic Zone remains the only hope of residents of Pampanga and nearby provinces to obtain economic growth.

"The Clark International Airport is the only hope of our economy in Central Luzon. Ms Macapagal knows fully well that Kapampangans have been clamoring for its operation as (a) domestic or international airport. Once the airport becomes operational, there will be more jobs and businesses in the region," he said.

Cruz said the people of Pampanga would suspect a "Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo-Lucio Tan conspiracy" if she fails to operate the airport within 100 days.

"We will then suspect a sweetheart deal between her and Tan. That is the time when we will once again unite and call for Ms Macapagal's resignation," he said.

Renato Romero, vice president for North Luzon of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said without an operational domestic and international airport, Central Luzon would never become a highly progressive region.

He said areas outside Metro Manila like Davao and Cebu became progressive mainly because of their air and sea ports.

"In order for us to have similar development with Davao and Cebu, the Clark International Airport must first operate," he said.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Rice smuggling continues

DAGUPAN CITY—Rice traders and farmers in Pangasinan asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the smuggling of imported rice through the Poro Point in San Fernando City, saying it has been hurting them.

They claimed these smugglers belong to the same group that former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu had referred to in his testimony during the aborted impeachment trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Espiritu refused to identify the smugglers for fear of his life.

But local traders, who are engaged in the importation of agricultural products, said the same group is still into the illegal activities at Poro Point and at the Batangas City ports.

They said while rice smuggling hurts them, it hurts the farmers more because they cannot compete with the lower prices of smuggled rice.

"The smugglers buy the rice at P450 to P500 per 50-kilogram bag. Then they sell this at P750 to P800. They earn so much while the government earns nothing in taxes. They also make our farmers' condition pitiful," a trader pointed out.

He said smugglers even use sacks marked with "NFA (National Food Authority)" but the rice are re-bagged once they are landed at the Poro Point and at a re-bagging station in an eastern Pangasinan town.

The trader said the smugglers are also engaged in legal importation but "this is just a front for their illegal activities."

He claimed that the group is able to bring in an average of 300,000 metric tons or six million bags of rice every year.

A farmer-businessman said the NFA imports rice but the agency does not release these imports whenever there is enough stock in the market such as during harvest time.

"It is different with the smugglers who sell even during harvest time. Because they sell at a much lower price, the consumers buy their product to the detriment of the local farmers," he said. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

"I have known SEN. TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR. as a man of courage and integrity. This character became very evident in his initiative and perseverance in helping originate and pursue of impeachment of former President Estrada especially in its early stages. He also has extensive experience in government service."

Romeo J.Intengan, S.J.
Philippine Province Society of Jesus

"He had courage, integrity and dignity before, during and after impeachment."

Gloria Gonzales-Lim
Council of Philippine Affairs

"We believe he is capable of carrying out the duties and functions of a Vice-President of the Philippines."

Eustaquio Palispis
President, Citizens Crime Watch
NOVA-NCR Chapter

"He is a well-respected legislator and has always been a firm believer in moral ascendancy in public service which your administration espouses to establish."

Alejandro R. Yague
President, Provincial Bus Operators
Association of the Phils. (PBOAP)

Resolution 2001-307 of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Marinduque endorsing Senator TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR. as Vice-President of the Republic of the Philippines.

"We faithfully believe that Senator Guingona's unwavering commitment to public service and his strong support to Her Excellency's administration will uplift our plight as indigenous peoples and the nation as a whole."

Gaspar Cayat
Kalanguya Tribe Org., Inc. - North Luzon

"We believe that his competence and dedication in being at service to our people make him worthy of being your partner towards the attainment of our country's development."

Remedios Petilla
Governor, Leyte Province

"The Officers, Directors and members of our group humbly endorse the appointment of SEN. TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR., for the position of Vice-President."

Ernesto Romero
President, Eastern Negros Assoc.

"We are sure that he will bring honor and luster to the position of Vice-President, aside from the fact he is highly deserving to be chosen as such."

Gil M. Abarico
Davao Press Foundation, Inc.

WANTED:
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

"We believe that it must have the right people with a vision for the upliftment of the lives of the people. The Workers Assistance Center, Inc. could attest to his genuine concern and pro-people stand as we have known him way back during the time of Marcos."

Rev. Fr. Jose P. Dizon
Executive Director
WORKERS ASSISTANCE CENTER, INC.

"He led the way by boldy asking for the former President's resignation."

Evelyn Kilayko - Concerned Womens of the Phil. (CWP)
Dante Jimenez - Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC)
Norma Urbina - Institute for Urban Poor (IUP)
Neil Villanueva - Young Christian Socialist of the Phil. (YCSP)
Chelsie B. Magallanes - Caucus for Democracy (CD)
Karen Tanada - WAND
Sr. Marie Arnold - Servant of the Holy Spirit
Waldy A. Carbonell - Green Philippines
Emilita Cruz - Konsensya Pilipino (KP)
Lauro Vizconde - Vice Chair. - VACC
Boyet Montiel - RPM
Tess Baltazar - Konsensya Pilipino (KP)
Linggoy Alcuaz - People's Consultative Assembly
Jerry Go - Article 64 Movement (A64M)
Fr. Robert Reyes - GOMBURZA
Mae Sabio - FCMDM WOMEN
Msgr. Nico Bautista - Sulong Edsa
Atty. Jose Calida - Citizen's Battle Against Corruption
Rex A. Odiaman - Student Alliance for Democracy
Danny Trinos - Crusade Against Illegal Recruitment
Myrna Gojar - Urban Land Reform Task Force
Andy Q. Rosales - PMDG

"We owe it to ourselves and to all those who believe in the competence and statemanship of SEN. TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR. and his capability to contribute in the efforts for national peace and development to be part of the initiative."

Former AMB. Sanchez "Ching" Ali
United Muslim Democrats of the Phil. (UMDP)

"Please allow us to join the incessant voice of our countrymen for the nomination of SEN. TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR. as your Vice-President being the first sound that called for the resignation of former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada in the hall of the Senate."

F/ Gov. Obet Pagdanganan
National President
Filipino Christian Muslim Democratic Mov't. (FCMDM)

Danilo Coronacion
Secretary General
Caucus for Democracy (CD)

"We express support for SENATOR TEOFISTO T. GUINGONA, JR. as Vice-President of the Philippines."

Veronica Mayo
Pres., Fed. Of Working Women Food Processors
Zamboanga City

Vilma Narvaez
Pres., Daap Agape Working Women Assoc.
Zamboanga City

"It is our sincere and honest belief that the Honorable SEN. TEOFISTO GUINGONA, JR. with his impeachable credentials and well – rounded experience in the various fact of governance will ably complement and ensure effective support for the success of your administration."

Noriel I. Sumaong
President - Faculty Association
Sultan Kudarat Polytechnic State College

"Guingona also hails for Mindanao and that would satisfy the "rule-of-thumb" that a President from Luzon should be balanced with a Vice-President from the Visayas or Mindanao."

Atty. Jose Aguila Grapilon
Immediate Past President
Integrated Bar of the Phil. - IBP

ADVT

Gloria wants 2 Erap EOs on LGUs scrapped

By Connie Fernandez
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered Local Government Secretary Jose Lina Jr. to review all policies affecting local government units (LGUs) especially those perceived to be "anti-devolution."

Among them are two executive orders issued by ousted President Joseph Estrada, Ms Macapagal said during a speech at the Philippine Councilors' League (PCL) national convention at the Waterfront Hotel.

She said she told Lina to "review and most probably rescind" the two EOs.

The first was Executive Order 189 that requires LGUs to submit an Annual Investment Plan to the Department of Budget and Management before their development funds were released.

The development fund represents 20 percent of the LGUs' Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).

"This is so anti-devolution," she told the delegates.

The second was EO 190 that directs the DBM to remit the local government's IRA share to the national line agencies instead of giving it directly to the LGUs.

"It is as if you can't be trusted with your own money," Ms Macapagal told a crowd of about 5,000 councilors.

She said the two EOs have been subjects of "much opposition" especially by members of the umbrella group Union for Local Autonomy of the Philippines (ULAP), to which the PCL belongs.

Prior to his appointment as interior and local government secretary, Lina was Laguna governor and president of ULAP. He was one of the first local officials who called for the resignation of then President Estrada in the wake of the "Juetengate" scandal that rocked his administration.

Aside from the review of the policies, Ms Macapagal also announced that she has ordered the DBM to release P8.9 billion to LGUs.

The amount would be credited to the IRA share of 79 provinces, 84 cities, 1,524 municipalities and 41,000 barangays for January 2001.

Her announcement was greeted with loud applause by members of the PCL.

President Macapagal also told the councilors that she had delegated the authority to grant travel requests of local officials to the Department of Interior and Local Government.

During her first few days in office, she said she got "so tired of signing travel forms. So I'm going to delegate this to the lower level."

Ms Macapagal also urged the councilors to institute reforms at their own level. "I need your cooperation in enacting legislation that will install the reforms," she said.

Among them was the need for transparency in local government transactions in the wake of a Social Weather Survey that showed that it was ordinary for people to pay bribes in processing licenses and permits.

Ms Macapagal said the LGUs could become "fiscalizers" or "watchdogs" to make sure that there is transparency in these transactions.

She also urged them to develop opportunities at their own levels and establish a level playing field for businesses.

The LGUs were also encouraged to put up economic plans and safety nets for sectors affected by globalization.

Ms Macapagal stressed that the LGUs are in the frontline in the delivery of services.

The role of the national government, she said, was to help the LGU provide these services. "The central government will not insist on doing what the LGUs can do better," she said.

Death came crashing on stone crushers

CEBU CITY—Four stone crushers, three of them women, were crushed to death by boulders Friday afternoon in Madridejos, one of the three towns on the island of Bantayan in the northern tip of Cebu.

The victims were crushing stones below a huge rock formation in Sitio Langob of the village of San Agustin when the rocks came loose and went crashing on them, according to town Mayor Doroteo Salazar.

The accident happened at around 3:30 p.m. last Friday but until late Saturday, only three bodies were recovered by the rescue team sent by Salazar to the accident site.

Recovered from among the rubbles were the bodies of the three women—Geralda Ducay, 61; Lucia Disaville, 36; and Esperanza Escala, 62.

The body of Gualberto Ducay, 69, a relative of Geralda, has yet to be found, Salazar said.

The mayor's son, Frederick, who joined the rescue team, said they found the recovery operation a very difficult undertaking as rocks half the size of 10-wheel trucks had covered most of the accident site.

He said they used a payloader, a bulldozer and other heavy equipment to recover the victims' bodies. The people in the area also helped in the recovery operations, he said.

Frederick said they would not stop until the body of Ducay was found.

Frederick said the daughter of one of the victims was also in the area when the accident happened but she was able to escape.

Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman Saturday promised Mayor Salazar that assistance would be extended to the families of the victims through the regional office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Cebu.

Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau

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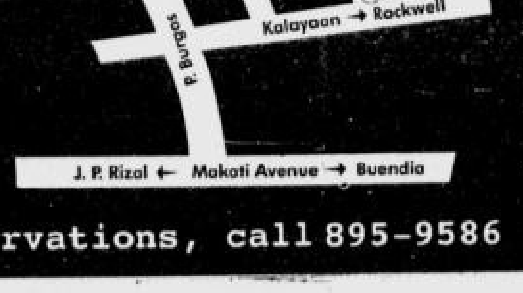

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Lawyers push for arrest of Erap

(From page A1)

the plunder case against Estrada.

Citing the "avalanche of evidence" in the suspended impeachment trial, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) charged Mrs. Ejercito and her son Jinggoy with estafa for allegedly pocketing part of the P200 million in tobacco excise tax meant for Ilocos Sur.

Also charged were Estrada's friend, Charlie "Atong" Ang and his maid Delia Rajas, Alma Alfaro and Nuccio Saverio.

Capulong said one of the plunder cases against Estrada was already complete and that the Office of the Ombudsman could already act on it.

The case stemmed from the allegation that Estrada received P130 million in tobacco excise taxes. It was filed in December by three lawyers' groups—the Organization of United Solicitors for Truth, and Estrada's Resignation (Ouster), Concerned Lawyers for Moral and Effective Leadership (Clamor) and the Caucus of Lawyers for Estrada's Abrupt Resignation (Clear).

Capulong said Desierto failed to act on the case despite the lawyers' submission of evidence presented during hearings of the Senate blue ribbon committee last year.

Desierto felt that Estrada then had immunity from suit, he said.

No lawyer for Estrada

After Estrada's ouster on Jan. 20, Desierto issued an order directing the former President to explain his side within 10 days.

The deadline expired on Thursday, but Estrada asked for a 30-day extension because he was having a hard time getting a lawyer, according to Capulong.

"The Ombudsman should deny it (Estrada's motion) outright. That is insufficient, dilatory. The Ombudsman should expedite the case," he said.

In the supplemental complaint filed by the VACC, Alfaro was identified as among the three persons allegedly used by Estrada to withdraw P130 million from Landbank. Saverio is a supplier of tobacco drying equipment.

Former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, former presidential legislative liaison officer Jimmy Policarpio, Estrada's personal lawyer Edward Serapio, alleged jueteng auditor Yolanda Ricaforte, and the former President are the main respondents in the complaint filed by the VACC on Nov. 24, 2000.

In the second supplemental complaint, Rajas, Alfaro and Saverio were also charged with plunder for allegedly diverting the tobacco excise taxes "through a series of conspiratorial acts."

Estrada's brother-in-law Raul de Guzman, Danilo Reyes and Mila Reforma, both directors of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation, are also facing plunder charges for allegedly helping Estrada launder the money.

The VACC, represented by Dante Jimenez and Lauro Vizconde, filed the second supplemental complaint so that the testimonies in the impeachment trial and the Senate committee hearings in the plunder case against Estrada can be included.

To pin down Estrada, the Department of Justice is tapping businessman Mark Jimenez, a member of the ousted President's inner circle, as a witness.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said Saturday she had given Justice Secretary Hernando Perez full authority to decide if Jimenez and those offering to testify in the corruption cases filed against Estrada should be granted immunity.

Private prosecutors are expected to meet with Perez today to express their doubts about using Jimenez and other former cronies of Estrada to testify.

Perez stressed that the DOJ would only grant immunity to witnesses who are the less guilty.

He said the department was still talking with the lawyers of Ang, who has also offered to testify against Estrada in exchange for immunity. Ang is out of the country.

Yesterday, Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo reiterated that the government should be wary of the Jimenez offer to testify.

"He didn't volunteer when we were looking for witnesses. Now that everything is over, he's testifying. Why? Is he looking for something in exchange?" Arroyo said in Filipino on a weekly radio program he cohosts with Bohol Rep. Ernesto Herrera.

"He might even get to dip his hand (into the contested funds) in exchange," Arroyo said.

Herrera said there was no need for Jimenez to testify as the prosecution case against Estrada was already strong.

"Now that there's no danger, he is coming out. Maybe he would even ask for more (concessions from government)," he said, speaking in Filipino.

Jimenez for congressman

In the same radio program, Herrera revealed that he had heard reports that Jimenez was planning to run for Congress in the coming elections.

"I heard he will run in the sixth district (of Manila), in place of incumbent Rep. (Rosenda Ann) Ocampo," Herrera said.

Ocampo, Herrera said, might run for vice mayor, while her father could go up against Jimenez.

Once Jimenez is extradited to the United States, the post will be declared vacant, according to Arroyo and Herrera.

The militant group Sanlakas yesterday urged the government not to betray the spirit of Edsa 2 and instead prosecute Estrada and his cronies.

Wilson Fortaleza, Sanlakas national president, said in a statement that "the people want prosecution and punishment not only for Estrada but also for his accomplices."

He said justice must be served by incarcerating Jimenez, Ang, Serapio and Dante Tan, who was implicated in the country's biggest stock manipulation scandal.

Solitary confinement

Fortaleza said Estrada "does not deserve solitary confinement."

"He should be given the privilege of spending the rest of his life in the company of his accomplices in Muntinlupa. They should find pleasure in swapping Erap jokes and stories of their nocturnal conquests," Fortaleza said.

In Davao City, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said it would mount street protests again if the DOJ cut deals with cronies of Estrada in exchange for pieces of evidence and testimonies against the former President.

Alvin Luque, Bayan-Davao City secretary general, said any deal with Estrada's cronies would violate the "spirit and essence of people power."

People power, he said, was not just about ousting Estrada but a "moral assertion of the public's will against cronyism and corruption."

Luque said the pieces of evidence presented during the Senate impeachment trial were enough to convict Estrada.

"All these talks about possible compromises with the cronies only raise suspicions that the Macapagal administration is accommodating the looters and plunderers of the nation's treasury," Luque said.

Robinson Montalba, chair of the Promotion of Church People's Response, said accommodating Estrada's cronies would only deepen social wounds instead of healing these as stressed by President Macapagal. ***With reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; and Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Women witnesses leave safehouse; threat not over

(From page A1)

They more than made up for their lack of firearms with brains, training and the right connections.

The team took orders from a man who for years was assigned the task of protecting then President Fidel V. Ramos and visiting dignitaries, including Pope John Paul II.

Now retired, Gen. Leo S. Alvez used to be the commander of the Presidential Security Group (PSG).

This made Alvez the prosecution's logical choice for chief of security, explained Pangasinan Rep. Hernani Braganza who headed the prosecution panel's secretariat.

It also helped that the safehouse chosen by the team, the Orchid Garden Suites on Pablo Ocampo Street, was not only near the Senate but was in Manila, under the area of responsibility of Chief Supt. Avelino Razon, head of the Western Police District.

Razon used to be Alvez's deputy at the PSG.

Alvez had talked to Razon and told him about his concerns for the security of the witnesses.

"We were counting on his assistance," Alvez recounted.

Career on the line

By promising to help secure the area, Braganza said Razon was "putting his career on the line."

But Alvez was quick to stress that Razon's help should not be interpreted to mean that he had already withdrawn support from the Estrada administration at the time. Because the witnesses were his "constituents," Razon only did his job as WPD chief when he extended assistance to the security team.

The Orchid Garden Suites was also an ideal choice for a safehouse because the Roces family, which was perceived to be "cause-oriented," had controlling interest in the hotel.

At the time he was hired by the prosecution, Alvez was in Cebu enjoying his retirement. He flew to Manila upon Braganza's request.

On Nov. 28, he accepted the job without any condition.

Six days later on Dec. 4, Alvez went to see Armed Forces chief Gen. Angelo Reyes, his classmate at the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1966. Alvez informed Reyes, his bunkmate at the PMA and *compadre*, of his new job.

More than a month later, Alvez would meet with Reyes in Camp Aguinaldo once more, this time to convince him to withdraw support from Estrada.

PROSECUTION witnesses Emma Lim and Carmencita Itchon relax inside their safehouse. ERNIE SARMIENTO

Braganza said that when the prosecution was just starting to form the security team, they wrote Reyes and asked if he could provide a security detail for the witnesses. Reyes replied that this would need clearance from the Office of the President.

"He was in an awkward situation," Braganza said, pointing out that what they had requested the AFP chief to do was to assign a security team to the very people who would testify against the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces.

After Alvez talked to Reyes, he started recruiting the members of his team. He chose retired enlisted men that had experience in providing VIP security. The group also started to gather intelligence information from the Philippine National Police and the AFP.

The lack of firearms did not hinder the security team from doing its job. As Alvez told Braganza when he was recruited for the task, no amount of firepower "could match a liquidation team."

By wearing bush jackets, the standard apparel for plainclothes bodyguards, members of the security team appeared to be armed. At times, they would rely on the armed security people of the House prosecutors who were legally allowed to carry guns.

The team was paid a salary by the prosecution from the budget allocated by the House of Repre-sentatives for the impeachment trial. Braganza said this was a pittance, "*binarat namin talaga* (we kept our expenses to the barest minimum)."

And there were times, Braganza admitted with embarrassment, when the security team's allowances were delayed.

On Dec. 11, the security team checked in at the Orchid Garden Suites.

They booked several rooms under the name of Joseph Velasquez and gave a brokerage firm as his address. The firm was nonexistent, Velasquez was not—he was part of the team and was to become its chronicler.

When the hotel staff got curious about the group and started asking questions, they were told, "The less you know, the better for you." They stopped asking.

Brownout

The next day was memorable for the security team.

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson arrived at the hotel, which was then experiencing a brownout and was relying on a generator for power. Singson, Alvez and some security personnel, boarded the elevator on their way to the room of the governor.

Midway to Singson's floor, regular power was restored and the elevator suddenly stopped. There was no trace of fear on the witness' face and it amazed Alvez.

It was also on this day that the team started receiving calls from active military personnel. It was not disclosed what the calls were about.

According to Velasquez's chronicles, no advance security arrangements had been made for Clarissa Ocampo, Equitable PCI Bank senior vice president, when she took the witness stand of the impeachment trial on Dec. 22.

This prompted Braganza to place an urgent call to Alvez's team, then at the Orchid Garden Suites, to provide security to the bank official. The group escorted Ocampo out of the Senate after her testimony.

Ocampo was taken to the bank's main office in Makati and there it was agreed upon that a separate security team would protect Ocampo and other bank personnel. That team was under former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa.

After Ocampo left the Makati office, a man in eyeglasses approached Alvez and Braganza. They learned that he was Manuel Curato, a lawyer of Equitable PCI Bank who was to corroborate Ocampo's testimony.

Because he looked lost, Alvez's group offered to bring him to the Grand Orchid Suites. Curato thought Alvez's group was part of Ocampo's security detail and went with them.

When they arrived at the safehouse, Curato became "inquisitive and suspicious," according to Velasquez's chronicles. Curato asked that he be brought back to the bank's Makati office.

Christmas Day

Alvez ordered one of the security men to escort Curato back. Although the impeachment trial went on a break for the Yuletide, the security team's workload remained heavy. Christmas Day was spent with the witnesses.

The Dec. 30 bombings in Metro Manila alarmed the security team. That night, Alvez attended the wedding of the son of AFP chief Reyes where Estrada was one of the principal sponsors. It was the perfect opportunity for Alvez to talk to some key military officers.

The first week of January was devoted to drawing up an evacuation plan for the witnesses and the prosecution team in preparation for the handing down of the impeachment court's decision the following month.

There was a consensus that whether Estrada was found guilty or was acquitted, chaos would ensue because passions were running high for both the pro- and anti-Estrada groups.

The escape plan was never implemented. The majority of senator-judges voted not to open the second envelope that would purportedly prove that Estrada accumulated wealth beyond his legal means.

People angered by the decision massed at the Edsa Shrine, and People Power 2 started.

Even when the new administration was installed on Jan. 20, the security team could not be disbanded yet. The witnesses still have to be protected.

Chavit . . .

(From page A1)

political kingpin of Ilocos Sur. Many concede that he has grown more powerful despite his announcement that he was retiring from politics after Edsa People Power II toppled Estrada.

Singson earlier asked Ombudsman Aniano Desierto to grant him immunity from criminal suit arising from his testimony against ousted President Joseph Estrada.

House prosecutors, as well as anti-Estrada groups, have also urged the new administration to spare their star witness in the impeachment trial from being prosecuted before the Sandiganbayan.

In his testimony before the Senate blue ribbon committee and the impeachment trial, Singson said he delivered to Estrada about P400 million in jueteng payoffs from gambling lords and P130 million in tobacco tax kickback.

Even before Estrada was deposed on Jan. 20, however, the NBI and a private citizen filed with the Ombudsman charges of graft, malversation and falsification of public documents against Singson in connection with the P130-million kickback.

COA report

In its letter to Quevedo, the mulitsectoral alliance Sisa said a special report of the Commission on Audit contained "damning proof of anomalies and illegal acts" by the governor.

The group said the report not only involved the P130-million kickback that Singson had admitted giving to Estrada but also "other more anomalous transactions that happened even before the Estrada presidency."

But Sisa also reminded Quevedo about a resolution that he, as archbishop of Nueva Segovia (based in Vigan), and Singson signed on Nov. 27, 1994 to eradicate jueteng in the province.

According to the group, the resolution was not implemented.

"(The) eventual discarding of this resolution by our governor (Singson) shows the complicity of the person and his unworthiness as a hero," it said.

Sisa appealed to Quevedo to endorse its call for Singson's investigation to President Macapagal-Arroyo so the governor could clear his name.

The group opposed the granting of immunity to Singson.

If the governor were granted immunity because of his "heroic exposé," Ilocos Sur would never have political renewal, Sisa warned.

Singson has dismissed the allegations as "political harassment" and "black propaganda" by Estrada's supporters.

He said the P130 million he had given to Estrada would soon be recovered after the government froze some of the assets of the ousted President.

Dinky wants gov't to be closer to people

(From page A1)

slacks and accessories. Definitely not the blue streak on her hair close to the forehead, which she decided to wear to "lighten things up" after everything seemed to worsen in the affairs of government since the start of the year.

Most importantly, she felt "sore" about leaving the civil society, her organizing work and speaking at rallies, convening and attending several meetings in one day, and acting as moderator in public forums.

But Soliman did not have to give them up after all with her new job. She said she wanted to be herself, as she would still be dealing with the same people she had met while working in church-backed organizations and NGOs.

After spending five nights and four days during the People Power II at the Edsa Shrine and Mendiola, Soliman had planned to have a three-day grand vacation, doing nothing but "sleep for three straight days, have a massage and soak for a very long time in warm water."

An hour before she celebrated her birthday and turned 48 on Jan. 27, Soliman told the INQUIRER why it took her several days to decide on her new job.

Definitely, her lawyer-husband Hector and children—Sandino, 15, and Marikit, 13—helped a lot after they gave their full support.

Instead of enjoying the grand vacation, Soliman used the three days for serious consultations with her family, colleagues and friends, and went on meditation, minus the long sleep and warm bath.

Soliman said she had to trek to Mount Banahaw, pitch tent with her husband and several close friends, and meditate on whether to work in government or stay with civil society.

A convenor of Kompil, Soliman learned of Ms Macapagal's offer to join her Cabinet from her colleagues at the Edsa Shrine when she arrived from Mendiola. She could not believe what she was hearing.

"After People Power I and II, I believe a person did not have to be a public official or public servant to exact accountability from government officials," she told her colleagues.

Where the heart is

"People Power I and II proved that an ordinary citizen could make government work for the people."

Born on Jan. 27, 1953 to Rizalino Juliano of Bulacan and Leonila Nervez of Negros Occidental, Soliman said social work was "not alien" to her.

"Social work, that's where my heart is," she declared.

With a degree in Bachelor of Science in Social Work from the UP Institute of Social Work and Community Development in 1973, Soliman took the board examinations for social workers in 1974 and placed fifth.

She immediately did social work and community organizing in Bukidnon and Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao, and in Tabaco, Albay, under the Social Action Center of the Catholic Church.

In 1978, she later worked with farmers as trainer and coordinator of the Nueva Ecija Small Farmers Organization Project under the Agency for Community Educational Services (Aces) Foundation.

Her work exposed her to dealing with other foreign church workers, prompting the dioceses to hire her as coordinator of the Asian Committee for People's Organizations (Acpo) in 1981.

Acpo is an ecumenical committee composed of the Christian Conference of Asia and the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference.

In 1982, she married Hector, who became a top official of the Department of Agrarian Reform up to 1998, when Ernesto Garilao was then department secretary.

In the 1990s, Soliman became a lecturer under the social anthropology development studies program in Ateneo and for graduate courses at her college in UP.

Sabbatical

In 1998, she and her husband went on sabbatical from their jobs to pursue higher learning at Harvard University.

Soliman took up her masteral course in public administration that dealt with analytics, economics and skills and consensus building.

"I was looking forward to enhance my skills about social work so I could effectively continue working for civil society. I never thought of working for government," she said.

She feared the high expectations of Ms Macapagal, considering that the DSWD was close to the President's heart after heading the department in a concurrent capacity when she was Vice President, Soliman said.

"I know it will be a tough act to follow because the DSWD obtained the highest public approval rating in any government and most especially during Ms Macapagal's stint," she said.

But during her one-on-one talk with Ms Macapagal on Jan. 23 in Malacañang after a breakfast meeting with protest leaders, Soliman said she brought up her concerns to the President, who assured her she can do the job with her kind of leadership.

Tips from Gloria

Ms Macapagal even gave her tips on how to run a big organization like the DSWD, Soliman said.

She said the President wanted her administration to do something about alleviating, if not eliminating, poverty. Helping the poor families would result in a fewer number of street children and domestic problems, she was told.

"I told her about my concern in working in a bureaucracy because this would be my first time. I may not be effective because of the principles, ideals and values that I have learned from being an activist and which I could not compromise during policy making at Cabinet-level discussions," Soliman said.

But when Ms Macapagal assured her that those would also be the bases for her running the government, Soliman said she got more scared of what she called "fear of the unknown."

She said she was touched by the President's sincerity, especially when she was told, "Dinky, you will be working in the corridors of public service. We will have a simple but dignified government. We will bring the government closer to the people."

"Wow, she didn't use corridors of power. It's a good start," Soliman said.

The next day, Soliman climbed Banahaw with her husband after a heart-to-heart talk with her children.

Sandino, she said, told her to go ahead if she believed she can help more people, while Marikit gave her approval only if her Mom would be "happy in her job."

When she returned, Soliman said she felt assured that she can do the job. She went to Malacañang and told the President about her decision.

On Jan. 26, Soliman was among those who took the oath of office administered by Ms Macapagal.

Missing

Asked what she would miss the most, Soliman cited "the informality of meetings with my colleagues in just about anywhere and my flexibility."

But she said she felt blessed that the people she would be working for were the same ones she had been actively working for when she was still an activist.

"The only difference is that, there is a word 'Secretary' right before my name; otherwise everything will be the same. Only this time, I will be working even doubly hard," Soliman said.

She said she was also prepared to accept criticisms from her colleagues and people's organizations if only to help her improve her performance.

"I will still be the same old Dinky," she said.

Estrada ...

(From page A1)

Jinggoy, mayor of the Estrada-Ejercito bailiwick of San Juan, Metro Manila, JV and Jude are honorary members or "mistahs" of PMA Classes 1972, 1988 and 1983, respectively, and were the political benefactors of the batches.

With their father's ignominious fall from power last month, the brothers are shying away from this year's reunion which will draw alumni and their families and guests up north to salute the colors and whoop it up.

"Our classmates have been telling us to come, if only to prove that everything is okay and stable," JV said at a press conference last week.

"But it's 50-50. We're looking at safety and security considerations. That's also the concern of our father," he added.

JV did not say how they could be harmed but there was bitterness in his voice when he recalled that the Armed Forces turned its back on his family when it withdrew its support for Estrada on Jan. 19.

"Even (military) intelligence was used against us," JV said, without elaborating.

He said that at the rate cases were being filed against his father, charges might also be brought against him and his brothers.

"We could be in jail when that (alumni homecoming) comes around," JV, son of Estrada by former movie starlet Guia Gomez, said.

Some PMA alumni, however, surmised the brothers might just want to avoid embarrassing situations, hence their decision not to attend this year's affair.

For one, President Macapagal-Arroyo, an adopted "mistah" of PMA Class 1978, is likely to be there, although the presence of the Commander-in-Chief at the occasion is not required.

Her presence will certainly be unpleasant for the Estradas who were forced to leave Malacañang by barge right after Ms Macapagal was sworn in as President, replacing their father.

PMA homecomings are usually addressed by the secretary of national defense. This year, Eduardo Ermita, a member of Class 1957, is expected to rally the cavaliers around the Macapagal administration.

"Homecomings are also occasions for classes to express their sentiments, including political ones, with banners and other gimmicks," said one officer. "And the Estrada brothers might be booed by the audience."

It will be recalled that during the 1998 election campaign, then President Fidel V. Ramos, as commander-in-chief, took along presidential candidate Jose de Venecia to a PMA homecoming.

De Venecia was roundly booed by the audience when it became obvious he was politicking, what with his speech and the political streamers and "other gimmicks" he had brought to the homecoming.

Had Joseph Estrada remained in office, he would have been adopted a "mistah" by Class 1971 which counts Sen. Gregorio Honasan and former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson—both supporters of the deposed president—as members.

Estrada had been good to the military and the police, showering them with benefits like bonuses and housing. On the fourth day of the "People Power II" uprising that forced him from power, however, the armed services withdrew their backing for his administration, hastening his downfall.

Estradá once went so far as to wear battle fatigues when visiting troops in Mindanao and joining them in "boodle fights" (eating with the hands from a communal food-laden table) at the height of the military campaign against the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front last year.

Earlier, a senator had called for a stop to the practice of PMA classes adopting politicians, saying this only led to the politicization of the armed services.

Many politicians, however, favor the practice because it gives them ties to the military, which has not really been passive in affairs of state since the Marcos regime.

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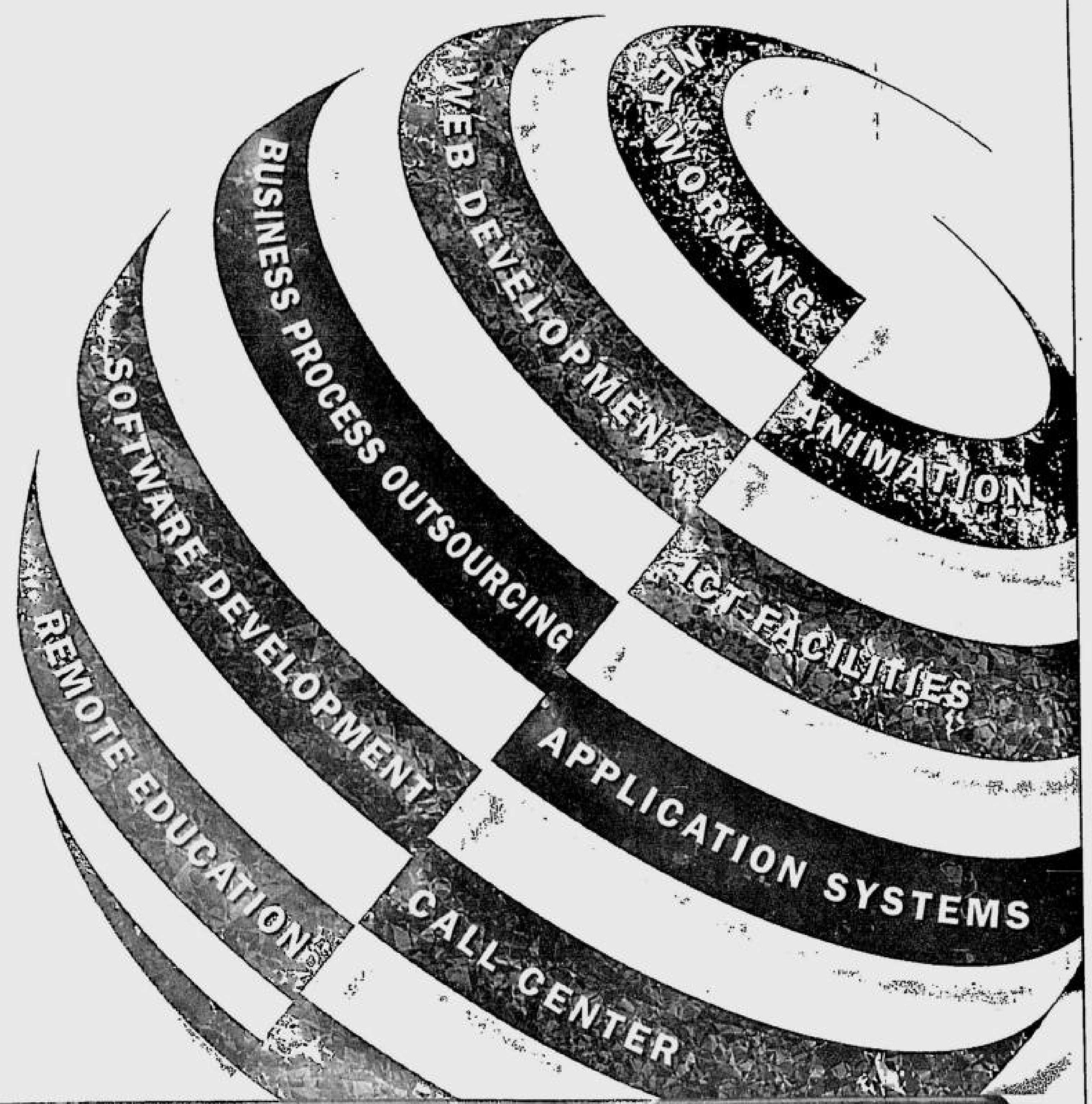

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Fairways to host Corporate tourney

THE ANNUAL Philippine Corporate Cup golf championship goes out of Luzon for the first time with the 13th edition set to be held at the world-famous Fairways & Bluewater Resort Golf & Country Club in Boracay at the onset of a big golfing summer.

This year's Corporate Cup co-presented by GP Barnes, Fil-Estate and the Fairways & Bluewater will feature a new seniors event that will be added to the regular division.

Seniors will play on Feb. 27-28 while the men's action will be on March 6-7.

Corporate Cup Golf Foundation Inc. chair Cecil Hechanova said that the choice of Fairways & Bluewater/ Boracay as venue will bring teams to a paradise island touted to become a top golfing destination in the new millennium.

"It is for this reason that we proudly carry the theme "Welcome to the new Philippines: Golfing in the real Boracay mainly because of the recent political events that put the country in the global limelight," said Hechanova.

"We intend to make this year's Corporate Cup the biggest in its entire history."

Balikbayans from the United States traditionally form a big part of the entry roster.

There will be team and individual competitions with participants to be classified according to their handicaps.

In five-man team play where the average of the four lowest handicap indexes will determine the overall handicap, Group I is for teams with handicaps of 2.5 to 9.99, Group II for 10-13.99, Group III for 14-18.99 and Group IV for 19 and above.

In the individual category, Group I is 0-9.9, Group II for 10-13.99, Group III for 14-18.99 and group IV 19 and above.

Interested parties may inquire through the CCGFI office at Unit 119, fourth floor Tower Ground of the Makati Cinema Square Complex with tel. nos. 811-1222 or 811-1230 where airline and hotel bookings may also be obtained.

Hechanova said that part of the proceeds fo the event, most especially the Mulligan fees, will go to the development of youth golf.

PEBBLE PRO-AM

Mickelson, Browne up; Woods 6 strokes down

PEBBLE BEACH, California— Phil Mickelson played with the stars en route to the top of the leaderboard Saturday while Olin Browne earned his share of the Pebble Beach Pro-Am lead the quiet way.

Playing with musicians Kenny G and Alice Cooper and on the same course as Tiger Woods and comedian Bill Murray, Mickelson was in the eye of huge galleries all day.

The 1998 champion and 17-time winner on the PGA Tour shot a six-under-par 66 on the host Pebble Beach Golf Links to reach the clubhouse with the lead at 14-under 202.

"Obviously, I'm very pleased to be tied for the lead," Mickelson said. "And I shot 66 at Pebble today. I was very pleased with that score."

Hidden in a group with a politician, a business consultant and the soft-spoken Tom Lehman, Browne fired a bogey-free seven-under 65 at Spyglass Hill.

"Truthfully, before I came here this week, I was hitting it all over the lot, a lot of bogeys," Browne said. "I toned it down, made three bogeys all week. I hope those are the last three I will see."

Woods, the defending champion who erased an eight-stroke deficit in the final round last year, shot a 69 to join a tie for 11th on 208, six shots off the lead.

The world's best player, Woods is trying to become the first since Jack Nicklaus in 1972-73 to win three tournaments at Pebble Beach in a year's span, having claimed the US Open in 2000.

Masters champion Vijay Singh of Fiji dropped a stroke on the final hole to finish at 70 but was alone in third place on 12-under 204.

Mike Weir of Canada shot a 65 on Poppy Hills Golf Club and was tied for fourth with Craig Barlow, Ronnie Black and Jerry Kelly on 205, one shot ahead of Scott McCarron.

The cut at two-under 214 was made after the third round, when golfers completed their rotation of the three courses. Among those missing the cut were David Duval, Mark Calcavecchia, Rocco Mediate and Lehman.

John Daly also failed to qualify for the weekend. He shot 69 each of the first two rounds but started Saturday with a quadruple-, double- and triple-bogey en route to a 79 and finished at one-over 217.

Daly's round was not as bad as Matt Gogel's. The second-round leader, who relinquished the lead on Sunday last year, followed a 62 with an 81 that included seven bogeys, a double-bogey and no birdies. He made the cut by two strokes.

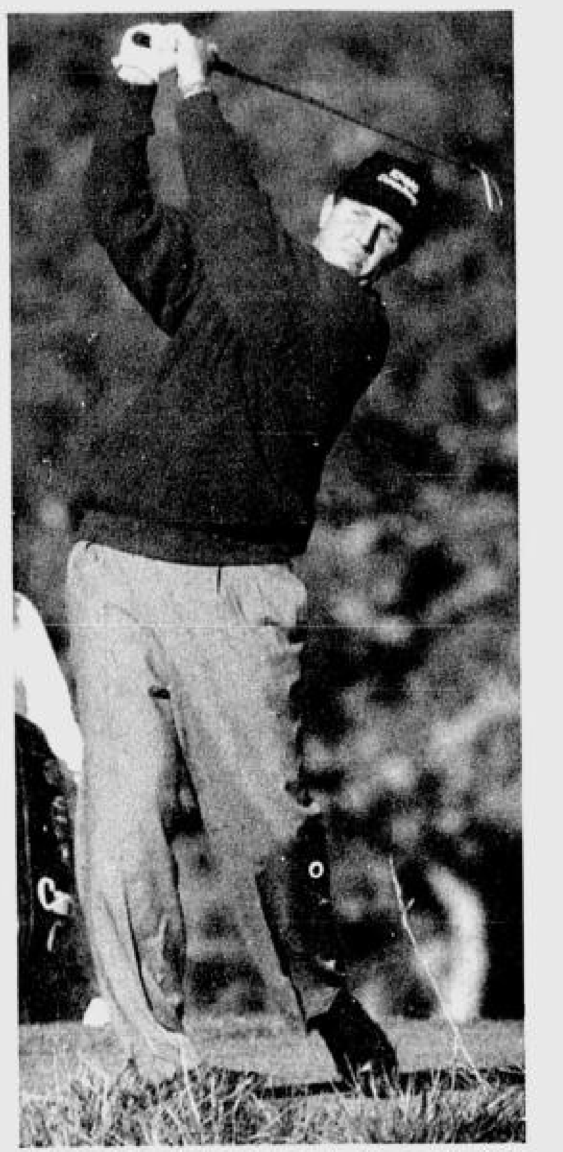
Gogel's 62 came at Poppy Hills, which turned in the best rounds Saturday, with Browne, Weir and McCarron all firing 65s.

"It's nice to go up there at Poppy Hills under such good weather conditions," Browne said. "You have five par-fives and it's obviously the key to playing that course well."

The good weather has been part of the story this week at Pebble Beach, where rain stretched last year's event to Monday, shortened the 1999 tournament to 54 holes and suspended the 1998 event for eight months. *AP*

Third round scores:

Phil Mickelson	70-66-66—202
Olin Browne	68-69-65—202
Vijay Singh	66-68-70—204
Craig Barlow	67-71-67—205
Mike Weir	70-70-65—205
Jerry Kelly	69-68-68—205
Ronnie Black	67-68-70—205
Scott McCarron	68-73-65—206
Brad Faxon	71-67-69—207
Frank Nobilo	70-70-67—207
Tiger Woods	66-73-69—208
David Berganio	64-73-71—208
Tom Scherrer	68-67-73—208
Willie Wood	67-69-73—209
Davis Love III	71-69-69—209



MICKELSON follows his shot from the fifth tee. AP

LINDSAY REIGNS

Lindsay Davenport shows her trophy after beating Martina Hingis, 6-7 (4-7), 6-4, 6-2, in the final of the Pan Pacific Open yesterday in Tokyo, Japan. Davenport, who also won the event in 1998, pocketed $175,000 as she prevented Hingis from topping the tournament for a record fourth time. Hingis got $94,000. AP

Pagunsan . . .

(From page A24)

Group of Companies.

"This is the best way to start a golf tour we've been waiting for almost two years, right?" said Pagunsan in Tagalog.

Pagunsan's sarcasm hinted of relief after the lack of sponsors and the withdrawal of Philip Morris sponsorship from worldwide sports events forced the cancellation of the local tour.

A three-shot swing on the sixth which Pagunsan birdied and Sinfuego double-bogeyed by sending a skulled bunker shot into the water became the event's most crucial turnaround.

Despite a bogey on the ninth, Pagunsan went cruising from there as Sinfuego also bogeyed before kissing his bid goodbye with another wet double on the killer 10th.

Gibson birdied the 14th, 15th and 17th but ran out of holes to overturn a seven-stroke deficit he faced through 14 holes.

Less stellar All-Star tilt

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao

NEXT week's All-Star Game may not be a showcase of the brightest stars in the NBA universe after all.

Withdrawals due to injuries have made the midwinter event at the MCI Center in Washington, D.C. less than stellar even as player apathy to the exhibition game has multiplied over the years.

Already, NBA Commissioner David Stern has dipped his hands into the All-Star rosters, replacing Orlando forward Grant Hill and Miami center Alonzo Mourning, a pair of injured players who were chosen to start for the East team by the fans despite being sidelined for the season, with New York forward Latrell Sprewell and Atlanta center Dikembe Mutombo. The latter two ranked third in their respective positions in the fan balloting.

Stern's housecleaning act may not be over as two more All-Star starters are currently troubled by injuries. Unhappy Shaquille O'Neal, the starting center for the West unit, has missed the LA Lakers' last three games going into today's home encounter with the Charlotte Hornets due to an inflamed arch on his right foot.

Toronto's high-flying crowd attraction Vince Carter, the leading vote-collector for the All-Star Game for the second consecutive year, has been bothered by soreness in his left knee, a condition (called "jumper's knee") since landing awkwardly after a fadeaway jumper during a Nov. 26 game against Chicago. At the time, he missed five straight games. The 6-7 Carter aggravated the knee injury during the first few minutes of the Raptors' Jan. 30 victory over Philadelphia that broke the 76ers' 13-game road winning streak. The latest knee flare-up has already cost him another two-game forced sabbatical.

In case Carter and O'Neal are unable to suit up in the All-Star Game, Stern may go for Miami center Brian Grant (as a replacement for Carter) and Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki or Sacramento forward Predrag Stojakovic (as a substitute for O'Neal).

The commissioner is not bound by any All-Star rules. He can choose his replacements without regard to position, unlike the fans who were required to vote for East and West starting lineups composed of two forwards, a center and two guards each, or the head coaches who must name two forwards, one center and two guards, plus two more who can be at any position, in each ballot in picking the seven All-Star reserves in their respective conferences. Additionally, the coaches were not allowed to vote for players on their own club. And most of their selections usually depended on the outcome of the fan balloting.

Significantly, some of the names on the All-Star ballot this year were placed out of position. To wit, Carter plays shooting guard for the Raptors but was listed at forward. Grant, who has been transplanted by Heat bench boss Pat Riley to center due to Mourning's season-long kidney ailment, was misplaced at forward while Nowitzki's bookend forward mate Michael Finley, who earned an All-Star West berth as a reserve for the second year in a row, was at guard.

Wolves win anew

TORONTO—Kevin Garnett had 30 points and Tracy Murray's game-tying 3-pointer was waved off at the final buzzer as the Minnesota Timberwolves extended their club-record winning streak to 10 games with a 108-105 victory over the Toronto Raptors in the NBA on Saturday night.

Wally Szcerbiak had 19 points, LaPhonso Ellis 18, Terrell Brandon 17 and Todd Day 10 for the Timberwolves, who shot 54 percent from the field.

Complete results: Minnesota 108, Toronto 105; Denver 105, Washington 100; Detroit 88, Cleveland 81 (OT); Orlando 96, Atlanta 84; Dallas 101, Golden State 95; Milwaukee 104, Indiana 85; San Antonio 90, Houston 88; Utah 111, Seattle 91; Vancouver 91, Chicago 84; LA Clippers 90, Portland 89. *AFP*

SPORTSWATCH

Fitness programs set

DANCESPORTS enthusiasts can now have an alternative besides from enrolling in training facilities offering these muscle-flexing activities for a price unreasonable for any ordinary sports buff. The Raymond Del Mundo School of Physical Fitness offers all kinds of training programs in physical fitness convenient for sporting aficionados from all walks of life. It provides specialized and exclusive workouts in aerobics, taekwondo boxing (taebo), yoga, calisthenics and ballroom dancing for interested individuals or groups. Interested parties may call Dra. Lorie Cunanan at 551-1358 or 0919-5664794. The RDM School of Physical Fitness also conducts outdoor training activities every Saturday and Sunday morning at the Cultural Center of the Philippines grounds.

Derby deadline today

MORE than 70 entries are expected to beat the 9 p.m. deadline today for the registration and submission of weights of the final batch of entries to join the last elimination round of the ongoing Roligon Mega Cockpit Grand 11th Anniversary 7-Cock Derby set for Feb. 6. As of presstime, the seventh batch of participants composed of sixty are still competing against each other for the elusive finals berth. No less than 10 perfect pointers from the other night's tussle are expected to join the only 27 championship contenders recorded after six days of competition. All those interested to catch up are advised to call the Roligon office at tel. Nos. 833-22-75 or 833-16-38. Submission of weights is set today from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Scuba diving tilt slated

THE LEISURE sport of scuba diving took the spotligth last Saturday as Verde Island Resort launched it's year-round team scuba diving tournament. Located between the Batangas mainland and Mindoro Island in Batangas Bay, the island resort introduced the event late last year, featuring a one-dive competition where members of the teams are tasked to look and identify the different fish abounding the island's 14 dive sites. "This is a very good eco-tourism sports event where the competitors simply enjoy the beautiful sights underneath the sea and the fun is in being the first to identify the different fish to be located in each dive, said tournament director Rolly Baron. Prizes at state are overnight accommodations at the Verde Island Resort and for those interested to join, please call Rolly Baron at 0917-5394561; or easycall 141-220616.

Tabanas draws fight

LAS VEGAS—Thailand's Fahlan Sakkreerin and Andy Tabanas of the Philippines fought to a draw in their 12-round junior flyweight bout here Saturday, leaving the lightly regarded World Boxing Organization title empty. Judge John Stewart scored the bout 115-113 for Sakkreerin, while Patricia Jaran had it 116-114 for Tabanas and Bill Graham made it 114-114. The fight featured little action. Tabanas was the aggressor in the first half, throwing and connecting with more punches, but Sakkreerin recovered in the later stages and finished stronger against his tiring opponent. *AFP*

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

GOLF: LPGA Subaru Memorial of Naples, Final Round at 6 a.m. (r) on ESPN

Heineken Classic 2001, Day One at 8 a.m. (r), Final Day at 9 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - Charlotte 49ers vs Houston Cougars at 8 a.m. on ESPN

HOCKEY 2001 NHL All Star Game at 10 a.m. (r –10 p.m.) on ESPN

ICE SKATING: Starskates Latin 2000 at 4 p.m. (r) on ESPN

HORSE RACING: Racehorse Digest at 4 p.m. (r) on ESPN

SOCCER: Western Union World Football at 1 p.m. (r) on ESPN

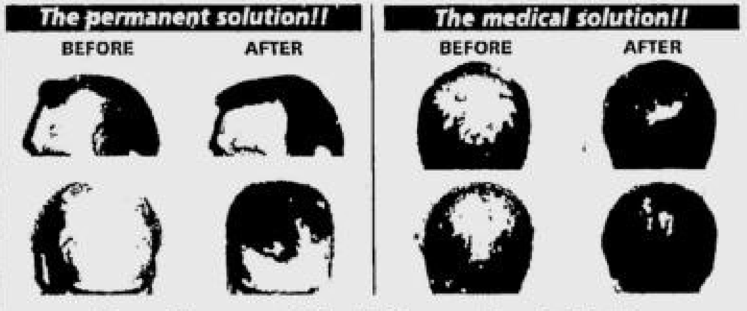
Italian Serie A Highlights at 7 p.m. on ESPN

Spanish Football League at 6 p.m. (r) on Star Sports and at 8 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Gran Canaria International Football Tournament - Rosenborg BK vs MSV Duisburg, Semifinals #1 at midnight (r) on Star Sports

MOTOR SPORTS: 2000 APRC Season Review Part 1 at 11 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



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FIRST DRAW ([illegible] 20, 2000)

NORTH LUZON / GMA	SOUTH LUZON	VISAYAS	MINDANAO
RO DUMLAO Tuguegarao, Cagayan	ROSALINDA C. ESCOLANO San Pablo City	EDMUND VILLAVERT San Roque, Antique	JUANITO F. RONTAL Mintal, Davao City
JOSEPH D. BENTER Mojon, Malolos, Bulacan	WILMA Z. KEH Indang, Cavite	NADOR GLORIA Malitbog, S. Leyte	ELMER P. RESMA Buhangin, Davao City
DANNY TUAZON Cabanatuan City	SALVADOR DESPI, JR. Lucena City	JETHRO LEO G. GALDO Tunga-tunga, Maasin City	J. N. ABRASALDO Toril, Davao City
JOSE B. GORORDO Sampaloc, Manila	PETE ELSENIQUE Lucena City	FLORENTINO ASIS TungaTunga, Maasin City	MARIO P. ABENOJAR Buhangin, Davao City
ALFREDO SAPITANAN San Nicolas, Guagua, Pampanga	PIPING RUBIA San Juan, Batangas	KELLY C. CHONG TungaTunga, Maasin City	PATRICK JOHN BAOY Balusong, Davao City
RENATO DELA CRUZ Orani, Bataan	FERDINAND P. QUIZO Sta. Rosa, Laguna	BALTAZAR S. BOLO TungaTunga, Maasin City	FREDICANDO MACION Cotabato
FERNANDO PABLEO New Asina, Olongapo City	PIO M. MANAIG Sto. Tomas, Batangas	GERARD RHEY MOSURA Kalibo, Aklan	CARLOS NUERE, JR. Matina, Davao City
NOE G. SANAO Pag-Asa St., Olongapo City	JENNIFER TUPAS Silang, Cavite	SAMIE D. ORITO TungaTunga, Maasin City	SEVERIANO LIBRADILLA Panabo, Davao
MARIANO B. TOMAS Comembo, Makati City	ROLANDO ESPANOL Lucena City	DAN ALLASO Iloilo City	JORGE J. JAUDIAN, JR. Cotabato
LEONARDO MxPRING San Nicolas, Guagua, Pampanga	HERNANI P. CORPUS Naic, Cavite	AVELINO S. CONLO Mala-iba, San Jose, Antique	ARIS R. ALEJANDRINO Buhangin, Davao City

SECOND DRAW ([illegible] 18, 2000)

HERMAN SO Tuguegarao, Cagayan	SHERWIN M. PASMBA Lucena City	IMELDA CUYOS Osmeña Blvd., Cebu City	ABEL L DANGLE Conval Province
HIPOLITO S. PAPA Bagong Silang, Caloocan City	JERRYME E. TOLENTINO Batangas City	FRAVIER "BIGSTOLT" LEPITER Cebu City	REY P. DELPARINE Matina, Davao City
ARNEL B. SALALILA Dinalupihan, Bataan	LEO VELASCO GMA Cavite	PAVOLO LIBRADO Talisay City, Negros Occidental	ELY VERA Padada, Davao del Sur
MELY VISTAN Meycauayan, Bulacan	HARVEY L. MANGHA Alaminos, Laguna	SANTIAGO ASTORGA Maasin City, Leyte	CERILO C. MAGARAO Agusan del Sur
EDWARD G. MENDOZA Quezon City	LOLIT M. PALENGUEZ Biñan, Laguna	RAMONETTE GERONA Hambo, Antique	ARNOLD LAVINA Makilala, Cotabato
GERARDO Q. SURLA Angeles City, Pampanga	RONALD BOONGALING San Pablo City	LORY ANG Kalibo, Aklan	RAYMUND S. WACAN, JR. Cotabato City
TINTIN EDUVALA Masinloc, Zambales	FELIX D. SARMIENTO Silang, Cavite	DR. MILLER SERONDO Bacolod City	CARLOS NUERE Matina, Davao City
BOBIE ESCONDE Benguet, Abra	MARIO MALIGLIG Batangas	ROSIE E. PENDEN Tibiao, Antique	ANICETO MANGOLAYON Buhangin, Davao City
ALEN M. ROBLES Muntinlupa City	DIVINA I. ARANDA Sariaya, Quezon	LICITO A. TUICO Inayawan Pardo, Cebu City	ROBERTO SALCEDO Agdao, Davao City
BONG G. JIAO San Nicolas, Guagua, Pampanga	FRANCISCO PEPITO Tanza, Cavite	SANTIAGO ATILLO, JR Toledo City, Cebu	JOBER MAMOCATCAT Agusan del Norte

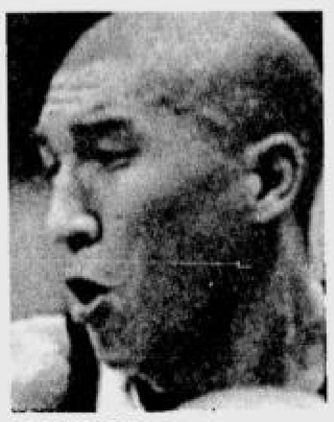
Promo period extended until Feb. 28, 2001. Grand Draw will be on March 19, 2001.
SEE POSTERS FOR DETAILS For inquiries call us at (02)677-1172 or (02)639-8365, or visit us at A-59 Sumulong Highway, Upper Luban, Antipolo City
Per DOH-BFAD Permit# 0669 series of [illegible]

Beermen spank Realtors, 89-76

Hotdogs rule fight-marred game

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(Philsports Arena)
5:15 p.m.—Red Bull vs Shell
7:30 p.m.—Mobiline vs Pop Cola

By June Navarro


BELASCO

BRAWNY Nic Belasco took the spotlight by powering San Miguel Beer to a thrilling 89-76 victory over Sta. Lucia Realty last night in the PBA All-Filipino Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Belasco, playing hero as superstars Danny Ildefonso and Danny Seigle got bottled up, provided the muscle and the resiliency inside as the Beermen notched their second straight triumph after an inspiring debut over sister team Barangay Ginebra last week.

Luckless in as many games, the Realtors have yet to chalk up a victory despite unraveling a gem of a scorer in Jercules Tangkay, a Cebuano searching for fame and fortune in the big league.

The 6-foot-2 rookie, pitted against well-built rivals, gave the Beermen some scary moments as he carried the cudgels for the Realtors in the first half as well as the payoff period.

He wound up with 17 points and got ample support from new comers Felix Belano and Francis Adriano, both MBA stalwarts, who had 12 points a piece.

"He (Tangkay) can play. We took him for granted, in the first half, thus allowing them (Realtors) to put up a good fight," said SMB mentor Jong Uichico. "Moreover, they had a good start which somehow caught us by surprise."

Learning from that experience and Uichico's coaxing, the Beermen buckled down to work in the first five minutes of the second half which saw Seigle puncturing the hoops relentlessly.

The Realtors resisted every San Miguel upheaval but finally gave in when Belasco, with a little help from Ildefonso and Seigle, came into the picture.

From a 53 deadlock, the Beermen drained 12 unanswered points punctuated by Belasco's jump hook off Dennis Espino to put San Miguel on safer grounds 65-53, three minutes remaining in the third canto.

Marlou Aquino, Belano and Tangkay mounted a fierce rally to push SLR to within 63-66 but Belasco took matters into his own hands as the Beermen cruised toward victory.

Belasco topscored with 19 points for the Beermen, while Seigle and Racela scattered 16 points each.

Alvin Patrimonio sparkled as Purefoods routed Alaska, 95-77, in the fight-marred second game.

Purefoods' EJ Feihl and Alaska's Kenneth Duremdes figured in a skirmish with 4:35 left. Both players got a double technical and were ejected.

The Hotdogs climbed to a share of the lead with the Beermen at 2-0, while the Aces fell to 1-1.

First game

SAN MIGUEL 89—Belasco 19, Racela 16, Seigle 16, Ildefonso 12, Victoria 9, Gamboa 6, Abuda 6, Lago 3, Duat 2, Mente 0.

STA LUCIA 76—Tangkay 17, Adriano 12, Belano 12, Aquino 9, Francisco 8, Ortiguerra 6, Mendoza 3, Orquillas 3, Del Rosario 2, Espino 2, David 2.

Quarters: 24-20, 44-44, 70-63, 89-76.

Second game

PUREFOODS 95—Patrimonio 25, Seigle 16, Pumaren 14, Feihl 13, Castillo 11, Evangelista 7, Daep 6, Fernandez 3, Yee 0, Guerrero 0, Victoria 0.

ALASKA 77—Peek 25, Arigo 13, Gahol 11, Duremdes 7, Wallkvist 6, Allado 5, Santos 5, Ticzon 3, Ordoño 2, Reyes 0, Evans 0.

Quarters: 18-14, 46-35, 63-52, 95-77.

NCA derby resumes at Big Dome today

QUALITY fights mark the resumption of the National Cockers Association 7-Cock Derby today and Wednesday, Feb. 7, at the landmark Araneta Coliseum.

Hosted by Marino Filart and the NCA, the blockbuster derby kicks off with three-cock elimination matches today, ending with the four-cock finals on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Heading the entry book are past NCA seven-cock derby champions Jessie Viceo, the Alan Tan Patrick Puno combine and Big Dome owner Nene Araneta. Also in the fold are Danding Cojuangco, James Chiongbian, NCA president Ito Yñares, Jun Santiago, noted breeders Boy Jiao and Jun Cometa, Alex and Gerry Escalona, Georgie Antonio, Eddie Araneta, engineer Pacifico Berin, Rudy Albano, Gov. Raul Molintas, Pampanga's famous cockfighting brothers Jun and Rudy Jingco and the Madlambayans.

Babes So, Eddie and Bomboy Araneta, Roel Feliciano and Sons, Tos Reyes, John Capinpin, Romy Pamatmat, Romy Panganiban, Jun Velasco, Manny Co, Peping and Esting Teopaco, Jojo Binay and Tanggol Eusebio, Blandy Tolentino, Boyboy Roa, Pepito Ngo, Boy Diaz, Al Velez and Boy Velez, Boy Lechon, Pol Estrellado, Erning Zubia, Paul Dy, William Co, Dicky Lim, Gerry Fevidal, Sonny Lagon, Rolly Ligon, Ramon Mansanares and Nilo Boy Lizares, among others.

MBA facing troubled times

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE ILL-FATED Metropolitan Basketball Association is bracing for another stormy weather.

This time, the league is finding itself without a guiding spirit, without a man at the helm following reports that Laguna team owner sportsman-businessman Bert Lina is resigning anytime this week as chair and president of the embattled MBA to run for governor of Laguna province.

Lina, who was elected MBA chair and president in 1999, said he was seeking the governorship of Laguna, after his younger brother, Joey Lina, the incumbent governor who is serving his second term in the province, accepted the position of secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government. Bert Lina is expected to clinch the nomination and head the administration ticket of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The MBA is slated to launch its 2001 season on April 15. But compared to previous years, this year's edition will have only eight teams in the fold, down from an original field of 14. Also late last year, the beleaguered league streamlined the office of the commissioner, slashing the budget for operations and expenses, prompting commissioner Ogie Narvasa to offer his resignation.

However, Lina said the board has asked Narvasa to stay, but it is up to the lawyer-sportsman whether or not to accept the MBA's standing offer.

The MBA was launched in grand fashion in 1998 with four-time PBA Most Valuable Player Ramon Fernandez as its first commissioner. Despite some fitful starts, the fledgling league, banking on the solid support of television giant ABS-CBN, survived the ordeal and even made its presence felt in the already crowded basketball scene. But the rosy future was soon broken into pieces as a result of several crippling controversies, including the resignation of Fernandez, the mounting complaints against poor officiating and increasing incidents of court hooliganism, not to mention the heart-breaking news that MBA sponsors have reportedly suffered losses amounting to P100 million in one season alone!

Like it or not, the MBA is falling on hard times. The recent exodus of its top players to the long established Philippine Basketball Association is one proof that the league is facing a very serious problem. Financial and otherwise.

* * *

SPORTS TRIVIA. Here are other historical highlights of the prestigious Bowling World Cup: In 1975, the Philippines stages the 10th anniversary of the annual event which attracts a record number of more than 89 countries. Hosted by Jose "Popit" Puyat, the tournament was marked by lavish receptions and extensive media coverage, befitting a truly world-class affair. Canada's Cathy Townsend won the women's title by outclassing Bermuda's Hatticanne Morrissette, 540-509, bringing the crown to North America for the first time. In the men's finale, Lorenzo Monti became the first ever champion from Italy by defeating Carlos Lovera of Venezuela, 561-544. The following year, Rafael "Paeng" Nepomuceno launched the first in a succession of four stirring World Cup triumphs by copping the men's title at the Persepolis Bowling Center in Tehran. Nepomuceno, a shy, 19 year old southpaw, had been impressive all week long, but the more experienced Lovera, the 1975 runnerup, was the oddsmakers' favorite in the three-game finale. Lovera had a fiery start, beating Nepomuceno, 200-181, but rookie Nepomuceno came from behind to turn the tables on Lovera by posting a nail-biting 571-567 victory and emerging the youngest ever champion in the colorful history of the World Cup. The women's crown went to American Lucy Giovinco, who humbled Sweden's Doris Gradin, 620-504.

* * *

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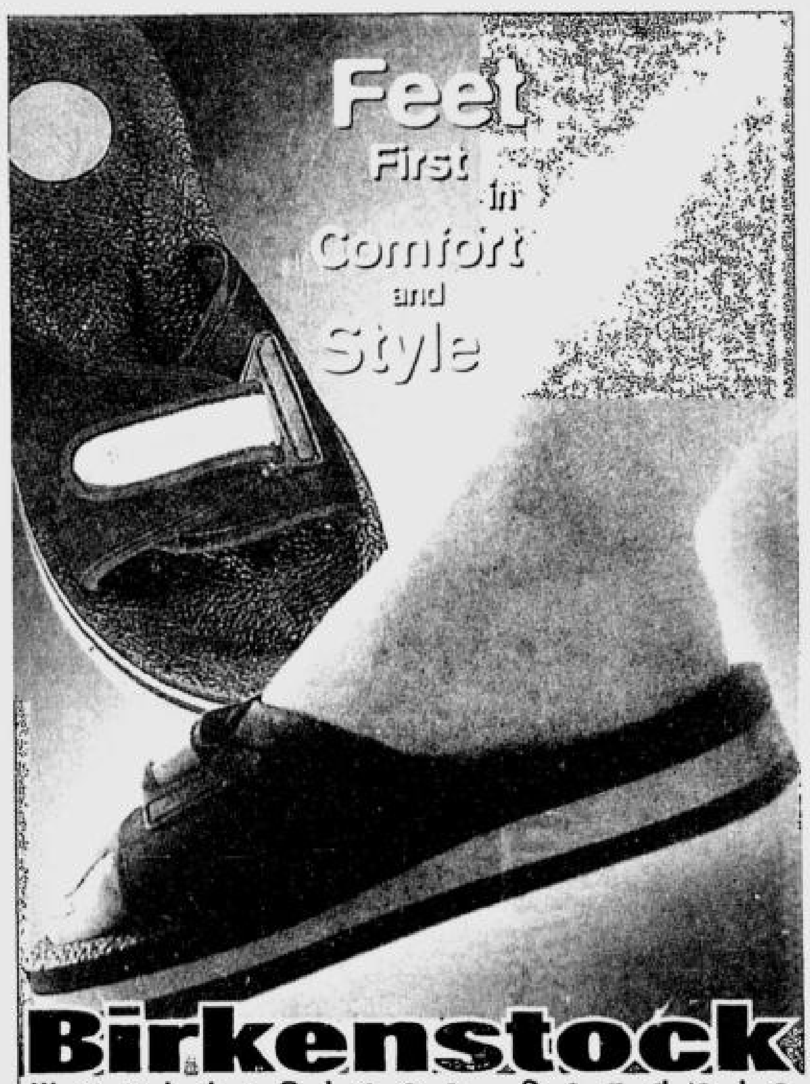

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Triathlon tryout slated

IN THEIR quest for triathlon talent, the coaching staff of the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) will conduct a triathlon tryout at the De La Salle Zobel swimming pool and at Narra Park in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City on Feb. 17. The event will be supervised by Rick Reyes, Jay Sales, Abet Alon-alon and Dong Sarmiento. For more information, contact the TRAP at 0919-5807512 and 0917-9116842.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

MRT-SOUTHWOODS OPEN

Pagunsan wins by 2

By Jong Arcano

THE DRY run to Japan mission was just perfect for Rey Pagunsan: One good white guy following his trail all morning and then a big kiss to a glass trophy that will forever make him remember his first professional victory.

Pagunsan, his guns all loaded for his coming campaign in Japan, took away Richard Sinfuego early then bravely faced the do-or-die bid of Canadian Rick Gibson down the stretch as he won the MRT-Southwoods Open by two strokes after a closing one-under-par 71 yesterday.

A late barrage of birdies by Gibson was all too late to deny the 32-year-old journeyman of his breakthrough win at the right time when the tournament-starved local pros are given a fresh break via a new tour presented by College Assurance Plan.

If there was anybody who succeeded in cooling down Pagunsan, it was his Japanese benefactor Kenji Takao who, together with some friends, tossed the first-time champion into the pond on the 10th tee.

Pagunsan received P100,000 for besting the field with his 274 aggregate, 14 under par at the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club Masters course in Carmona, Cavite. He shot a 64 in the first round then followed it up with rounds of 69 and 70.

Gibson, the Canadian ace who married former actress Josephine Garcia, shot a 68 to share second place at 276 with Ruben Sasutil who came out of nowhere to shoot the second lowest round of 65.

Sinfuego, leader by two after three rounds, lost the sting of a fiery form that had him scoring three 65s in a row and his 77 marred by two double-bogeys pulled him down to solo fourth at 278.

Tony Lascuna checked in fifth with a 70 for 280 while tournament-favorite Cassius Casas settled for sixth at 282 following a 71 in this event also backed by Camp John Hay and the Fil-Estate

PAGUNSAN/A22

MRT — South
FEBRUARY 1-

PAGUNSAN (right) raises his glass trophy as Southwoods chair Bob Sobrepeña applauds.
ROGER MARGALLO

Ritualo eyes grand slam

By Dennis U. Eroa

WILL Welcoat's Ren Ren Ritualo complete his own version of awards grand slam?

After getting the nod of the Philippine Sportswriters Association as amateur basketball cager of the year, the 6-foot-1 Ritualo is the hottest bet to emerge as MVP in the ongoing PBL Challenge Cup and the player of the year by the PBL Press Corps.

The results will be known today as the PBL holds its awarding ceremonies at the National Sports Grill in Greenbelt, Makati City.

Ritualo's main rivals for the MVP and player of the year trophies are Shark's Roger Yap, Chairman's Cup MVP, and the high-leaping Chester Tolomia.

Also a La Salle standout, Ritualo is the league's leading scorer (14 pts ave). The six-footer Yap, who will join Purefoods after this conference, topped the statistical race, followed by Tolomia. Ritualo is a close third.

Sportswriters will also pick Mr. Crunchtime, Insider, Defensive Minister, coach of the year and Mr. Intangible on top of the usual Rookie of the Year and members of the mythical teams.

Ritualo has averaged 14.6 points and three rebounds in the Challenge Cup."He's virtually unstoppable," said Blu Sun Power mentor Nat Canson.

Marlon Legaspi of Blu Sun Power is a cinch to win the Rookie of the Year award. UAAP MVP and Ateneo-Pioneer standout Rich Alvarez is also expected to make the mythical team. The 6-foot-4 Alvarez is a rookie.

Others in the running are Shark's Michael Robinson and Gilbert Malabanan and the Welcoat troika of Eugene Tan, Jojo Manalo and Yancy de Ocampo.

Manalo, the NCAA MVP, averaged 10.8 pts. De Ocampo emerged as the league's leading rebounder with 9.6.

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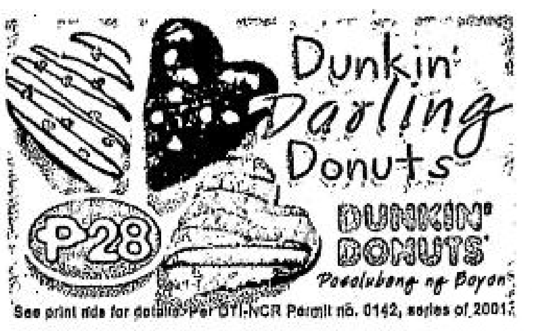
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

■ **Foul play suspected in ill man's death on board police car** A26



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■ **INTERVIEW: Ping Lacson** A26

Payatas 'war' has claimed ten lives

By Philip C. Tubeza

THERE is a problem brewing in Payatas that is deadlier than "trashslides."

Quezon City police on Saturday revealed that tricycle driver Quintino G. Cajustun was the 10th man to be murdered since mid-December, pointing to an escalation in conflict between two groups living near the Payatas dumpsite in Quezon City.

"We don't know how or why this conflict between Christians and Muslims began in Payatas," SPO1 Efren Sobrepeña said. "But since mid-December, it has left 10 people dead, with Cajustun as the most recent victim."

All the 10 victims are Christians, he added.

Sobrepeña said the killings had not been reported to police because people were afraid to come out. The lawman said he only learned about the other murders when he began investigating the Jan. 30 murder of Ivan Occena, Cajustun's cousin.

Cajustun, 35, of Lower Jasmin Extension, Barangay Payatas A, was allegedly set to testify against his cousin's assailants when he himself was killed Friday afternoon, Sobrepeña said.

Police also believe that the suspects in Cajustun's murder—known only as "Rodel" and "Bandung," said to be residents of Lower Jasmin—are the same ones who killed Occena.

Cajustun had just attended Occena's wake and was on his way home with a certain Elonie

PAYATAS/A26

Jealous Ateneo student shoots self on prom night

FOR MOST young people, prom night is the beginning of a new life as they teeter on the threshold of adulthood. But Ateneo student Christian Duke Pizarro, 17, wanted to make prom night his last day on earth.

At dawn yesterday, Pizarro arrived home on Catanduanes Street in Barangay Paltok in Quezon City from his junior-senior prom with a heavy heart. Pizarro's classmates told police that his girlfriend—his prom date—danced all night with another young man whom Pizarro knew to be her former crush.

The heartbreak apparently led Pizarro to shoot himself in the head with a .38 revolver in his room, said investigator SPO1 Rodrigo Barrameda.

But the young man did not succeed in ending his life. He is now in critical condition at the Heart Center of the Philippines, also in Quezon City.

Pizarro's mother told police she did not realize anything was wrong when her son went directly to his room after he came home.

A few minutes after Pizarro entered his room, a gunshot broke the early morning silence.

Mrs. Pizarro went to her son's room and saw him slumped in bed with blood oozing out of his head, police said. When she looked closer, she found he had shot himself in the right temple, she told police.

She rushed her son to the Philippine Heart Center where he was under close observation as of yesterday afternoon.

Police said Pizarro's classmates were all shocked at their friend's suicide attempt. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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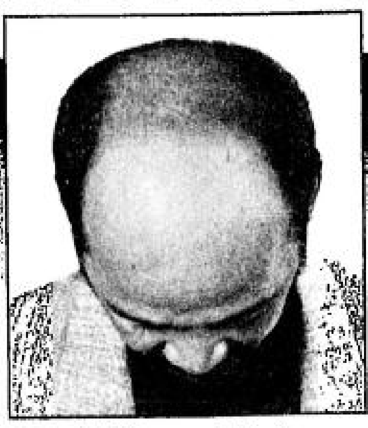

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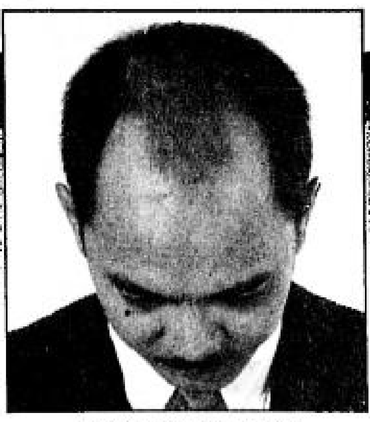

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Foul play suspected in sick man's death on board police car

By Christian V. Esguerra

MANILA police suspect foul play in the death Saturday of a 28-year-old man in Sta. Ana, Manila.

Narciso "Sengseng" Cabrera of V. Francisco Street, Sta. Mesa, Manila, was found dead about 6 a.m. Saturday inside a red barangay patrol car.

Police said that when they found the victim, his mouth was bleeding, his neck was swollen, and his wrists bore handcuff marks.

Police said Cabrera was mentally unstable.

SPO4 Solomon Batalla Jr. of the Western Police District's homicide division said Cabrera had just been discharged from the National Mental Health Institute.

Police said that on Friday, Cabrera's sister Evangeline Cabigao sent Cabrera back to the mental institution for allegedly attacking Raymundo Antiporda, 50.

But the institution refused to admit Cabrera so his relatives talked to Dominador de Jesus, chair of Barangay 595, Zone 58, who then assumed custody of him, police said.

The following day, Cabrera's body was found inside a barangay patrol car with no license plates, SPO4 Batalla said.

Payatas 'war' has claimed ten lives

(From page A25)

Penaflorinda at about 1:30 p.m. Friday, when he recognized the gunmen heading straight toward him, police said.

"He was already allergic to Muslims," SPO1 Sobrepeña said. "(Cajustun) must have thought they were also going to kill him, so he took out his homemade .38 revolver."

Unfortunately, when he pulled the trigger, the gun jammed, Sobrepeña said.

Rodel and Bandung, reportedly armed with a .45 pistol and .38 revolver, opened fire and hit Cajustun in the face and right chest. They fled on foot, Sobrepeña said.

Occena was killed on the morning of Jan. 30 while on his way to a neighborhood store with his one-year-old daughter.

Occena's daughter is still in the hospital with a 9-mm bullet in her chest, Sobrepeña said.

Cojuangco and Cepeda: Test cases for Gloria gov't

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT WAS asked over the weekend whether the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo government would play it practical or go for a political solution in two cases.

In Urdaneta, Pangasinan, the popular Ginebra team was to seek a first win against Tanduay Rhum last Saturday. No odds were given. But Ginebra, an underdog, sustained a newfound defensive philosophy in the final quarter to score a 12-point victory, its first in two outings in the PBA All-Filipino Conference.

At the sidelines before Ginebra draft recruit Mark Caguioa, 21, made his presence felt with a mature all-around game—scoring, relaying, rebounding and defending—businessman Danding Cojuangco was tagged an awful underdog in his bid to retain the chairmanship of the San Miguel Corp.

San Miguel owns the Ginebra franchise in the Philippine Basketball Association.

"Boss Danding is in grave danger or being eased out," moaned game promoter George Alcantara.

He slashed his right forefinger across his throat and declared, "It's that bad. It seems the government is going all out to get rid of him"

***

Not only that, added Alcantara, who also assists lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud in various undertakings. He said Cojuangco's trouble, plus the absence of a supporter inside the Pagcor board, could jeopardize the forthcoming defense by Gerry Peñalosa of his World Boxing Council super flyweight crown.

Peñalosa, his eyes cocked on the WBC 115-pound championship proper, is scheduled to clash with a tough Japanese foe here next month.

The promotion, rued Alcantara, could fall through due to the absence of major supporters, particularly San Miguel and Pagcor.

If Cojuangco is not fighting for survival at San Miguel, there would be no trouble, explained PBA finance officer Sonny Barrios, also known as the pro league's resident worrier.

Barrios, a sharp-eyed reader of national trends, said there's obviously a mad rush to discredit Cojuangco.

How? I asked.

Well, have you not noticed anonymous efforts to link him to coup attempts and other disorders? Who else would do it?

***

Barrios said Cojuangco had actually made himself scarce, often staying in Australia, to avoid any suspicion of whatever sort. But the nasty rumors against him continued to persist.

Boss Danding tried a political solution himself, added Alcantara, and offered his party to the government coalition.

Both Barrios and Alcantara swore the stage was clearly being prepared for a Cojuangco ouster as San Miguel chair.

If Cojuangco is ousted as San Miguel chief, explained Barrios, it could only be a silly political move, nothing else.

Why? I asked again.

Because, Barrios explained, no sane, neutral, right-thinking authority would dare take out a tested executive who has succeeded in turning around the fortunes of San Miguel and has, in fact, made it one of the top success stories in Asia.

You mean Danding's Dilemma would be one of the early test cases for the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo government?

I don't know how any other executive, no matter how good and sharp, can do a Danding Cojuangco, Barrios said. Just a change in the San Miguel leadership will surely lead to a drop in San Miguel share prices, he added.

***

That huddle on Danding Cojuangco's impending fate took place before the game started.

After the tip-off, Tanduay zoomed to an early nine-point lead mainly on awesome power baskets. But a shift in manpower, which saw Ginebra adjusting its backcourt, brought the scores closer.

Then, before the end of the second quarter, the golden-haired Caguioa, a right-hander, crossed the lane, received a pass on the keyhole and promptly took off on his left foot to score a neat jumper.

The half ended with Ginebra behind by only half a basket, 35-36.

"Didn't you notice?" I asked PBA Commissioner Jun Bernardino, pointing to Caguioa's left-foot takeoff.

Jun B., who had just risen from his undergoal seat, nodded in agreement.

He seemed doubly convinced now that the so-called "wrong foot" perfected by the likes of Michael Jordan and freshly demonstrated by Caguioa could indeed be an unstoppable weapon on the court.

I had wanted to tell the PBA boss that the weapon should be made compulsory for future national basketball teams, whose recent members could often use only one solid take-off foot.

***

But, hey, I whispered to Mr. Bernardino, haven't you heard the latest tip about our friend Doming Cepeda?

Jun B. stared me in the eye. What? he asked.

They said the Arroyo government is all set to retain him as head of the Games and Amusements Board.

Jun B. smiled but he failed to conceal his amazement.

That would be a national record, I reminded, if Doming Cepeda is made to stay as GAB chief.

Why, how could it be a Philippine record?

You see, I told the PBA Commissioner, Doming Cepeda first served as GAB chief under Fidel Ramos, he was then retained when Erap Estrada took over in 1998. He would be under a third President if Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo takes him in.

Does he have strong connections with President Gloria or her husband?

I have no idea, I said. Maybe he has close links with the Arroyos. But I was just told he would be retained.

Don't you worry, Jun B. assured, that doesn't mean he would be serving as GAB chair under three successive Presidents: Ramos, Estrada, Arroyo.

Why? I asked and explained that Cepeda could also be a test case for the Gloria government.

No, no, Mr. Bernardino retorted smiling, if Doming Cepeda stays at the GAB, he would be serving only under two governments: FVR-Erap and then FVR again.

Jun B. smiled a very naughty smile.

Back to the ballgame.

Citizen Ping

By the Metro Staff

INTERVIEW

WHEN he shakes your hand, the first thing you notice is that his thumb is up even as he grasps your hand. He's not giving you the thumb's-up; his thumb is bound in gauze because, he says, it just got caught in his car door.

When Director General Panfilo Lacson, member of PMA Class '71 and former chief of the Philippine National Police under the Estrada administration, enters the Makati restaurant for the near-midnight interview, the women see him at once and squirm in their seats and smile as if they were thinking of something forbidden. At least four of them, fortysomething and with paper and pen in hand, follow the general to his seat, warn him that they "don't usually ask for autographs," and proceed to ask him for his.

"You should run in the elections," one of them tells him. "You'll win, we're sure."

"You're so handsome in person," another gushes, wringing her hands like a girl.

And the country's former police chief, the man implicated and cleared in the "Kuratong-Baleleng" killings, the feared official accused by his critics of involvement in kidnapping and murder, is beaming and blushing like a little boy caught doing something naughty.

Do you dye your hair?

When you're 52 and you say that you don't dye your hair, then you're lying.

Where do you get a haircut?

Sa barber shop *lang.*

What was your first assignment?

Metrocom, 1972. We were retained in Fort Magsaysay, Laur, Nueva Ecija. That was in preparation for Martial Law, but at that time, we didn't know there was going to be Martial Law.

You're a PMA-er, but why did you enter the police force?

I had no choice because in 1991, I was with the Philippine Constabulary and we were made to choose to join or be absorbed by the PNP or remain in the Armed Forces. That means the Army, Navy or Air Force.

If I joined the Army, I would be lagging behind in terms of career pattern. My contemporaries would be through with being company commanders or battalion commanders. I could compete with them, but I chose to join PNP in 1991.

When I became PNP chief in 1999, I wanted to regain the lost glory of the police. When I was a kid, our barrio policeman in Cavite got the same treatment from the people as the school principal.

Why is it no longer glorious to be a cop?

Over time, the respect was lost. We see commuters and motorists diverting to another route if they see a cop at the end of the street, because they know the cop would ask money from them.

If you see a police car in a dark alley, would you still like to pass that alley? The normal reaction is to drive away *dahil baka makotongan ka.*

Why do you have a scar on your chin, like Harrison Ford?

When I was a cadet, I was into boxing and I didn't want to wear the mouthpiece because there were only two and everybody was using them, from featherweight to welterweight. I was imagining the previous fighter, so I didn't wear the mouthpiece. I got this (scar) from a knee. After three days, I had to box again because I didn't have an alternate.

Why do you eat with your left hand?

I'm ambidextrous. When I was a young boy, I used to write with my left hand, but my aunt forced me to use my right hand. My aunt was living with us in the house.

What else can you do with your left hand?

Fire a gun. I box with my left hand, southpaw. I use the scissors.

Do you sign with your left hand?

No, with my right.

Can you describe the last days with Erap in Malacañang?

We were in Malacañang on Jan. 19. We were supposed to create an ad-hoc crisis committee. (AFP chief of staff) Gen. (Angelo) Reyes and the military hierarchy were already in Edsa.

The President (Estrada) felt dejected. He was so down, trying to look for quick solutions, like reasoning out with Angie Reyes. He sent (Defense Secretary) Orly (Mercado) and (Interior Secretary) Fred Lim to just reason out, not to force him to change his mind, before they finally went to Edsa.

At around 5 p.m., I called up my officers in Camp Crame, but the President didn't want me to leave. He needed some advice and support, but when I asked permission to leave, he allowed me. Gen. (Jewel) Canson called me and said the officers were waiting.

When I reached Camp Crame, I told my officers, "I'm not going to make a unilateral decision here. It's going to be a consensus. I want to hear from each one of you."

How many officers were there?

Plenty. All the members of the directorial staff, directors of the national support unit and commanders. I heard each one of them. The decision was unanimous, to withdraw support so the President would be left with no choice but to resign. The statement was prepared by the group.

Would you have done that if Mercado and Reyes didn't go to Edsa?

We saw the popular demand of the people. He was quickly losing support from all sectors, so inevitably, it was really going to happen. I think I did what was supposed to be done at that time, given that kind of situation.

The President knew it would be very painful for me to make the decision. But what makes it less painful was I had the consensus of my officers. Mercado and Reyes simply accelerated the whole process.

I did not decide for the group. I asked them to give me a few minutes to convey our decision to the President. So I called him up and told him, "Sir, I just talked to my officers. Sorry, but we have to withdraw support for you. I hope we will remain good friends, but this is it. I'm sorry. In a few minutes, we will announce that we will withdraw our support."

Was there a compromise? People see it in two different ways. You are admired for being a true gentleman, but you are also criticized.

The President said, "At least, you are gentleman enough to bid me goodbye, unlike Angie." He was so hurt because Angie just made him his *kumpadre* last Dec. 30.

He said, "Okay, go ahead, I understand. One day, let's talk again and will you please tell me where I went wrong and why we went this far."

How did you feel?

Honestly, I almost cried. My voice was breaking. But I didn't cry because I was in front of my officers. What would that make of me, in front of my officers, bidding my President goodbye and crying?

What's wrong with crying? Sen. (Aquilino) Pimentel cried. Sen. Franklin Drilon cried.

I know.

When was the last time you cried? Do you remember?

No, but when a man says that he hasn't cried in his entire life, he is also lying.

What makes you cry?

When I'm alone and I think of all the news reports and criticism that were so unfair, including the ones coming from the Inquirer... *Masakit* 'yon because sometimes you see friends shying away from you, like you have leprosy.

You were one of the most controversial PNP chief?

I'm not the type who explains to the media and makes an effort to clear myself.

When was the first time you met Erap?

In 1972, I was ordered by the Metrocom chief to arrest Erap who was then mayor of San Juan. *Binugbog niya si* Rudy Fernandez over some damsel.

After I complied, I told the Metrocom chief, "Sir, mission accomplished." I just gave him my salute and I was dismissed. *Ayokong maipit.* Martial law *na nu'n.*

When was the second time you saw Erap again?

When he was already at the PACC (Presidential Anti-Crime Commission), in 1992, 20 years after. He was already vice president. He sent for (Reynaldo) Berroya to look for me. According to Berroya, the vice president was asking if I wanted to join the PACC.

At that time, I was at loggerheads with local officials in Laguna on the issue of jueteng. Most of the local officials there were involved, so there was a petition for my ouster as provincial director. I was appointed February, but July I was already on my way out. I joined PACC and it was the turning point of my career.

Let's face it, the position of PNP chief is a political position, whether they say you were appointed because of your competence. That's a lot of bull.

Was it a career move when you joined PACC?

I was conscious that somehow, if I was joining the vice president then and he would succeed as PACC chair, *medyo* bright *'yung* future *ko sa kanya.* There was the opportunity.

Did he remember you?

Of course, but then, it was the Filipino-Chinese community who was endorsing me to him. When I was in Cebu, I solved a number of kidnap-for-ransom cases for Filipino-Chinese families. I had a good service record in Cebu when it comes to kidnapping.

PACC was created by ex-President Ramos to address kidnapping because at that time, most of the investors were leaving the country.

Why don't you show your sense of humor on TV?

As chief of the PNP, you are a symbol of authority and you have to be serious. If people will see you on TV *na kekenkoy-kenkoy ka, baka hindi magpaliit ng tiyan ang mga pulis at hindi ako sundin ng mga nangongotong.*

Do you get a lot of propositions from women?

I rarely see the letters which are sent to me. Some of them contain pictures of women and even telephone numbers.

How come you were identified by Mary Ong (Rosebud, who alleged he was involved in kidnapping suspected drug lords)?

I was accused of being a principal by inducement. I really don't know what that means. And she was mentioning dates like May 5 and May 7, 1998, when I was on floating status. So how can I induce people to kidnap Chinese drug lords and kill them? I didn't have influence on that.

But she claims you know each other?

Yes, I met her once, at the PACC Task Force Habagat. She was used as an informant by Gilbert Cruz, former chief of intelligence of the task force.

What will make you decide to run in the May elections?

Availability of funds because *kung sasabak ka* and you are not

CITIZEN/A28

LACSON in PNP chief mode: He almost cried on Erap's last day.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 5, 2000
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 1:1-19
Gospel: Mk 6:53-56

Having crossed the lake, Jesus and his disciples came ashore at Gennesaret where they tied up the boat. As soon as they landed, people recognized Jesus and ran to spread the news throughout the countryside. Wherever he was they brought to him the sick lying on their mats. And wherever he went, to villages, towns or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplace and begged him to let them touch just the fringe of his cloak. And all who touched him were cured.

Commentary

Nothing, no amount of pontificating about Christocentrism and all that, can keep simple folks from touching, wiping, kissing, and praying before images that they associate with the Holy. This is probably a wholesome gesture we have never fully understood nor appreciated. It may look like idolatry but it is not. It is faith, pure and simple; a basic belief that anything (even the tassel of a cloak), or anyone who represents the Holy is like a conductor that conveys energy, electricity. A simple faith makes it easier to see the invisible cables that connect to God through a whole network of lines. While the word ministry has been duly emphasized, it's about time we became more comfortable with the intimacy of the touch ministry.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Conspiracy—The actions of appellants show that they conspired to rob and kill the victims. There can be no other conclusion that can be deduced from the foregoing circumstances. Conspiracy need not be proved by direct evidence, and proof of previous agreement to commit the crime is not essential to establish conspiracy. It may be inferred from the acts of the perpetrators, whose conduct before, during and after the commission of the crime, can show its existence. For conspiracy to exist, it is not required that there be an agreement for an appreciable period prior to the occurrence, it is sufficient that at the time of the commission of the offense, the malefactors had the same purpose and were united in its execution. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Purisima, Third Division, People v. Carrozo, G.R. No. 97913, October 12, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

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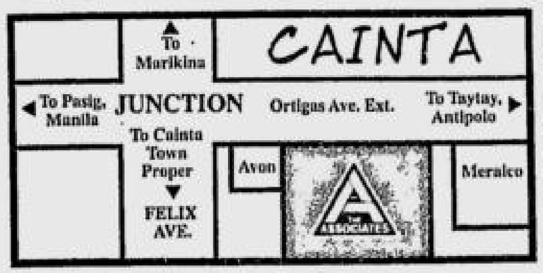
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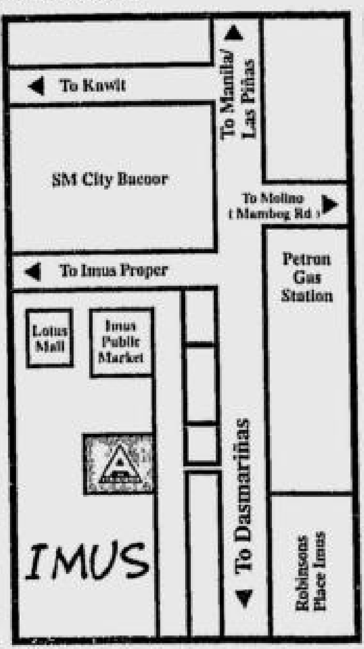
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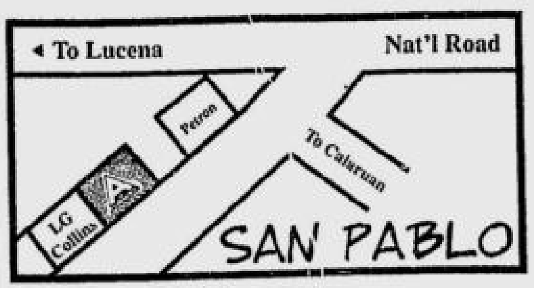
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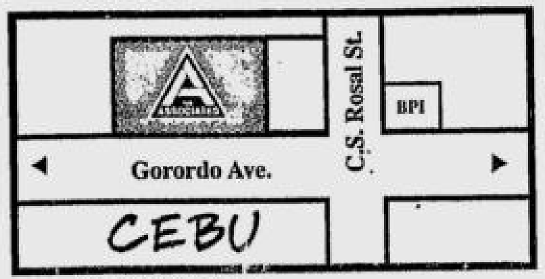
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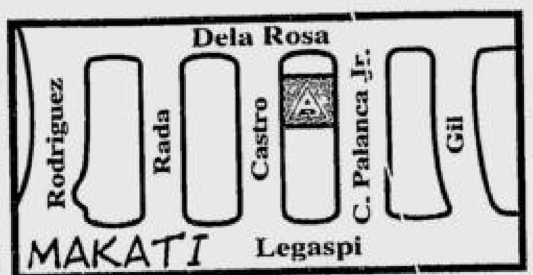
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Citizen Ping

(From page A26)

prepared, matatalo ka pa, 'wag na lang. I haven't really decided.

What will be your platform, if ever?

Peace and order. I am aware that I would be going into legislation, not law enforcement.

Do you think a former cop can be a good senator?

I don't know. There's (Rodolfo) Biazon and Gringo (Honasan).

***Si* Chavit (Singson), *'di ba* former chief of police in Ilocos?**

I don't know about that. Embalmer *'yun.*

What will be your strength as a legislator?

Intrepidity. And maybe my track record as PNP chief. I am banking on that. People's awareness of me is very high, 93 percent based on the surveys conducted by SWS (Social Weather Station) and Pulse Asia.

By the way, we did not subscribe to SWS. When I took over, I saw all the expenses there. It may sound a little offensive to you, but there was a media payroll there, retainers for SWS. And we're talking of millions. So I called the controller and said, scrap all these.

What's your weakness?

Mahina ang PR *ko.*

Opportunities?

Wide-ranging *'yon.* There are many choices. I can just live a private life and start my own business, whether here or abroad. I can be just Citizen Ping.

Threats?

Mostly physical.

Why are you running?

To continue public service.

You held a position of great power. Weren't you ever tempted to use it for your own benefit?

I never felt the power. *'Yung* driver *ko, 'pag merong naka*-encounter *sa kalsada,* I would always tell him, "O, 'wag mo nang *patulan, wala tayong panalo diyan. Mabugbog mo 'yan o baka mabaril mo, problema pa natin. Pagpasensiyahan mo na lang." Mainitin lagi kasi ang ulo ng* driver *ko.*

Did you ever kill people in the line of duty?

Of course, but I never counted how many.

Did you ever fear for your life?

Wala talagang matapang, wala talagang duwag. It really depends on your gut feel. *Sa mga raids, alam mo may mga tiempo.* In every operation, *iba ang kaba ng dibdib mo. Meron namang* instances *na ang* feeling *mo ang tapang-tapang mo, parang* invisible *ka at hindi ka tatamaan ng bala, ikaw mismo ang nananadyak ng pinto.*

At other times, *wala ka pang nakikita,* cover *ka na nang* cover.

What are you scared of?

Maraming fears *sa buhay ng tao.*

What's your greatest fear?

Treachery, because you'll never know when it will come.

Do you have guards at home?

Meron, dalawa.

How much were you making as PNP chief?

P30,000 a month. That's not enough. *Kailangan talaga um*-extra *ka. Depende na lang kung* legal o illegal *ang gagawin mo.*

That's why even the policemen, I encourage them to engage in legitimate business activities. *Wala namang* prohibition for as long as there's no conflict of interest.

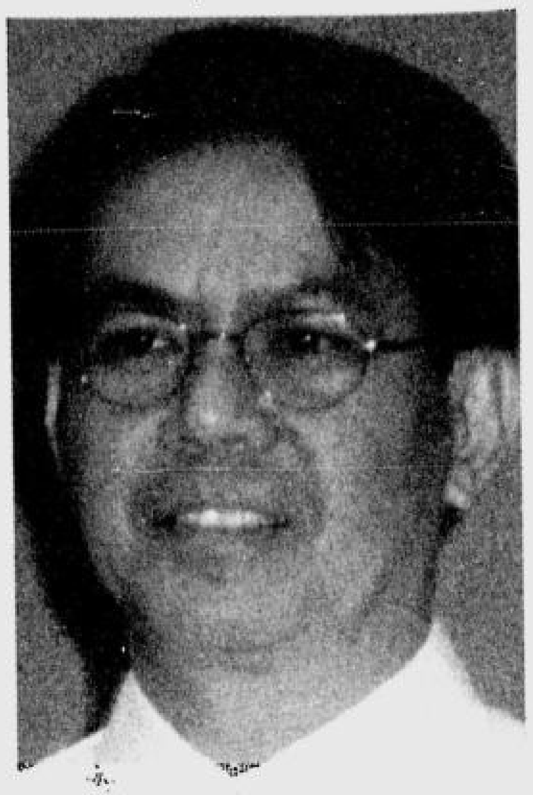
How rich are you?

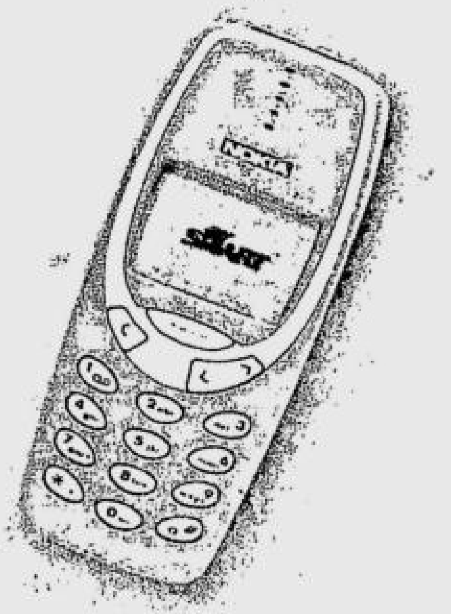
I got P5 million for (the rights) my movie ("The Ping Lacson Story," where he was played by Rudy Fernandez). And I was able to get another P5 million from a real estate property along Quezon Avenue which I subleased five years ago. Instead of receiving the monthly fees, I was paid a lump sum.

Are you happy with the way Rudy Fernandez portrayed you in the movie?

Yes. What I was not happy about was the way the movie was made. *Mga* 35 percent *lang ang totoo dun.* The rest, cinematic license *na.* I was not happy with the way Toto Natividad directed it.

PING/ A29





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Citizen Ping

(From page A28)

Where did you study?

In a barrio elementary school and the town high school in Imus, Cavite. Then I went to Lyceum where I took up AB Philosophy, before I entered PMA.

When I was younger, I wanted to become an NBI agent.

You still have a house in Cavite?

My folks are still there. Both my parents are still alive and we visit them every now and then.

You like wearing designer clothes?

Hindi naman. This polo is an old Tommy Hilfiger. The shirt inside is a souvenir shirt from Washington. '*Yung nabibili lang sa* airport. My pants are Polo.

What brand is your spectacles?

Armani.

Your pen?

Parker. It's just a Christmas gift. I don't want to lose that because that's the one I used to sign my letter of resignation. Black ink.

What's the brand of your underwear?

Marks and Spencer.

Is that your original wedding ring?

Yes.

You wear a Rolex.

Stainless lang 'yan. This is just over P100,000 and not the kind that you see among casino-goers.

The Audi that you use, is that yours?

That's an old one, 1998 *pa*. Bulletproof.

Your never removed your PMA ring since 1971?

No. '*Yung sa iba nga, nabubura na 'yung* year. But I was able to take good care of this. *Maganda pa.*

What turns you off?

Double talk.

Would you have done the same things if you were to live your life all over again?

No regrets, not even in declining money from jueteng.

When you are regional director, you are talking of at least P3 million a month. When you're chief of PNP, you're assured of P5 million from Chavit and other extras.

How do you react to text rumors about you? That you are the father *daw* of the baby of Carmina Villaroel?

Pati nga 'yung kay (former beauty queen) Aileen Damiles, *sa akin daw.*

Pero ano naman ang mukha mong ihaharap sa tao? Maganda ang auto mo, maganda damit mo, pero alam naman nilang galing ang pera sa katarantaduhan. Maipagmamalaki mo ba 'yon?

Ano'ng mababaw na kaligayahan mo?

Just to go driving alone at night. *Nakaka*-refresh '*yon*.

How fast do you drive? Do you break the speed limit?

Wala namang speed limit *dito sa 'tin.*

As PNP chief, how do you think you affected the lives of Filipinos?

Malaki ang pinagbago ng disiplina ng pulis. Dati, when you see a policeman, *iiwasan mo kasi alam mo* they would ask money from you. But I believe *nabawasan na 'yon.*

How do you react to text rumors about you? That you are the father *daw* of the baby of Carmina Villaroel?

Pati nga 'yung kay (former beauty queen) Aileen Damiles, *sa akin daw.*

You don't drink?

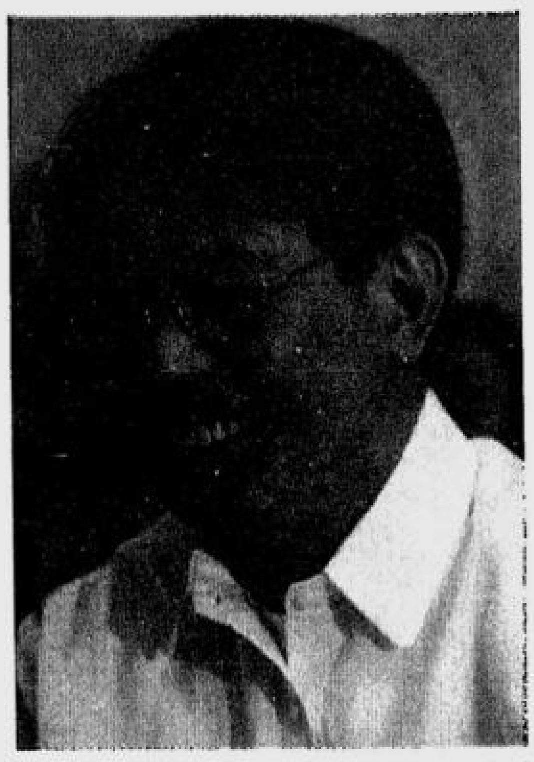
No. I also don't smoke.

Have you experienced going to one place and you were not recognized?

No, in one way or another, *makikilala ka talaga.*

How do you feel when people treat you like a star?

I'm not used to it. *Nahihiya ako.*



THE EX-PNP chief smiles: "As a symbol of authority, you have to be serious."

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6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	VERTICAL LIMIT
7	DOLBY SURROUND	LITTLE NICKY
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9	DOLBY SURROUND	TABI TABI PO
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6	DOLBY SURROUND	RED PLANET
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALAHIBONG PUSA
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BOOBA
9	DOLBY SURROUND	SYOTA NG BAYAN
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5	DOLBY SURROUND	VERTICAL LIMIT
6	DOLBY SURROUND	THE YARDS
7	DTS	WHAT WOMEN WANT
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	VERTICAL LIMIT
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	HIGHLANDER
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12	DOLBY SURROUND	DUDE

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7	DUDE, WHERE'S MY CAR	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GREENBELT

1	THE YARDS	in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
2	WHAT WOMEN WANT	in SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	VERTICAL LIMIT	in DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL SOUND
4	SOON TO OPEN Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	WHAT WOMEN WANT THX	in DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	VERTICAL LIMIT	in DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	THE YARDS	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	VERTICAL LIMIT	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	SYOTA NG BAYAN	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1	(DDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	(SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
3	(DTS)	WHAT WOMEN WANT
4	GOLD (DTS)	DUDE
5	GOLD (DOLBY)	WHAT WOMEN WANT
6	GOLD (SDDS)	CLOSED
7	GOLD (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
8	[illegible]	TABI TABI PO
9	[illegible]	BOOBA
10	[illegible]	SYOTA NG BAYAN

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1		TABI TABI PO
2		HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
3	(DTS)	SYOTA NG BAYAN
4		WHIPPED
5		
6	(DTS)	

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3
(Kalaw) tel 536.4315

1	(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	(DTS)	RESERVE
3		TABI TABI PO

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1		BOOBA
2		SYOTA NG BAYAN
3		TABI TABI PO
4	(DOLBY DIGITAL)	VERTICAL LIMIT
5		HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001

1	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
2	SYOTA NG BAYAN
3	TABI TABI PO
4	BALAHIBONG PUSA
5	RESERVE
6	VERTICAL LIMIT
7	BOOBA
8	102 DALMATIANS

Uniwide Metromall
(Las Piñas) tel. 873.5606 loc. 1074

1	PALIGAYAHIN MO AKO
2	AKIN KANGAYONG GABI
3	PIRANHA 3
4	WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30.00
5	
6	

Uniwide Coastal Mall
(Parañaque) tel 879.0001 loc. 2152

1	TUKSO NG PANAHON
2	ALINDOG NI BARBARA
3	UNDER COVER KID
4	WATCH 3 MOVIE FOR ONLY P30 00

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BALAHIBONG PUSA
2	MEET THE PARENT

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	VERTICAL LIMIT

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
A	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8568

1	(DOLBY)	BOOBA
2		BALAHIBONG PUSA
3		RESERVE
4		TABI TABI PO
5		SYOTA NG BAYAN
6		DUDE
7	(DTS)	WHAT WOMEN WANT
8	(SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
9	(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
3	TABI TABI PO
4	SYOTA NG BAYAN
5	
6	

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1		SYOTA NG BAYAN
2		BOOBA
3		TABI TABI PO
4	(SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
5		SYOTA NG BAYAN
6	(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
7	(DTS)	WHAT WOMEN WANT
8		BALAHIBONG PUSA
9		HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1	(DTS)	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2		TABI TABI PO
3		BALAHIBONG PUSA
4		HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
5	(SDDS)	102 DALMATIANS
6		BOOBA
7	(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
8		WHAT WOMEN WANT

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1		BALAHIBONG PUSA
2		HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
3	(DTS)	102 DALMATIANS
4		SYOTA NG BAYAN
5	(SDDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
6	(DOLBY)	BOOBA
7	(DOLBY)	TABI TABI PO

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	ANOTHER 9 1/2 WEEKS
Lords	TABI TABI PO
Jennet	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
4	VERTICAL LIMIT

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

1	
3	SYOTA NG BAYAN

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

1	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	TABI TABI PO
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
4	SYOTA NG BAYAN
5	WHAT WOMAN WANT

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
4	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
5	BOOBA
6	VERTICAL LIMIT

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1		SYOTA NG BAYAN
2		TABI TABI PO
3	(DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1		SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	(DTS)	BOOBA
3	(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
4		TABI TABI PO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1	(SDDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
2		HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
3		SYOTA NG BAYAN
4	(DTS)	TABI TABI PO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1	(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
2		SYOTA NG BAYAN
3	(DTS)	TABI TABI PO
4		REMEMBER THE TITANS
5		BOOBA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	VERTICAL LIMIT

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	TABI TABI PO
3	VERTICAL LIMIT

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	BALAHIBONG PUSA
2	BOOBA
3	MALIKOT ANG AGOS

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	
2	LITTLE NICKY
3	TABI TABI PO

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	VERTICAL LIMIT
2	SYOTA NG BAYAN
3	BOOBA
4	TABI TABI PO

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 243.2783

1	(DTS)	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	(DTS)	TABI TABI PO

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	TABI TABI PO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	BOOBA
2	SYOTA NG BAYAN
3	TABI TABI PO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	PREDATOR FROM THE DEEP
2	BOOBA
3	HIGHLANDER
4	REMEMBER THE TITANS

Berma
tel 879.2168

1	CLOSED
2	CLOSED

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
2	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
3	TABI TABI PO
4	VERTICAL LIMIT

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1	(DOLBY EX)	RED PLANET
2		BOOBA
3		SYOTA NG BAYAN
4	(DTS EX)	VERTICAL LIMIT

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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1. VERTICAL LIMIT
2. TABI TABI PO
3. WHAT WOMEN WANT
4. 102 DALMATIANS
5. SYOTA NG BAYAN
6. WHAT WOMEN WANT
7. BOOBA

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1. VERTICAL LIMIT
2. SYOTA NG BAYAN
3. 102 DALMATIANS
4. WHAT WOMEN WANT
5. TABI TABI PO
6. BOOBA

BACOLOD (034)441-0453

1. REMEMBER THE TITANS
2. BALAHIBONG PUSA
3. LITTLE NICKY
4. HIGHLANDER
5. PREDATOR FROM THE DEEP
6. HOT SPOT

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	TABI TABI PO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	WHAT WOMAN WANT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	THE YARDS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	BOOBA
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	VERTICAL LIMIT
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	SYOTA NG BAYAN
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	SYOTA NG BAYAN
MIRAMAR	LARO SA BAGA / PORNOGRAPHER
ODEON	VERTICAL LIMIT
ODEON-2	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
ROBEN	SYOTA NG BAYAN
TANDEM-1	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
TANDEM-2	WHIPPED
TIMES	READY TO RUMBLE / CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	ANAK NG YAKUSA
ACT-2	ANAK NG KANO
ACT-3	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
ACT-4	TURN ON
CORONET-2	SYOTA NG BAYAN
QUEZON-1	TABI TABI PO
REMAR	SYOTA NG BAYAN
REMAR-2	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	SYOTA NG BAYAN
OCEAN CINEMA-A	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
OCEAN CINEMA-B	TABI TABI PO
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
CINEMA-2	VERTICAL LIMIT
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SYOTA NG BAYAN
CINEMA-2	TABI TABI PO
CINEMA-3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WHIPPED
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BALAHIBONG PUSA
CINEMA-6	TANGING YAMAN
CINEMA-7	MALIKOT ANG AGOS
CINEMA-8	BOOBA
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	WHAT WOMAN WANT
CINEMA-12	DUDE
CINEMA-14	THE YARDS
CINEMA-15	SYOTA NG BAYAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	TABI TABI PO
CINEMA-3	HINDI SISIW ANG KALABAN
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	102 DALMATIANS
CINEMA-2	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-3	WHAT WOMEN WANT
CINEMA-4	WHAT WOMEN WANT
CINEMA-5	VERTICAL LIMIT
CINEMA-6	THE YARDS

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AT FIRST, "Proof of Life" may be dismissed merely as the movie where costars **Russell Crowe** and **Meg Ryan** met, worked together, and realized that they loved each other so much that they gave up their respective partners. Indeed, the film's publicity has harped on the two stars' real-life affair to whet viewers' interest in the movie.

But the film itself is much more than that. In fact, for the most part, it scrupulously avoids references to romance. We're even told that a passionate love scene involving Crowe and Ryan was edited out of the final print because it called too much attention to itself and upstaged the film's more pertinent points.

The production's sense of focus is truly commendable. And, we're glad to note, it enables the movie to emerge as an incisive study of the psychological complexities of kidnapping, and its effects on the victims and the families they leave behind.

In this instance, the kidnap victim is an American who's been tasked with building a dam in a Latin American country. A rebel group spirits him away for ransom, and his wife (Ryan) does everything she can to bring him back alive.

However, the task is too big for her, so an experienced negotiator (Crowe) enters the picture to wheel and deal with the kidnappers' spokesperson. In the process, Ryan and Crowe fall for each other, but, as we've noted, the movie doesn't dwell all that much on their illicit love.

It's more interested in the prolonged and subtle war of nerves and psyches involved in the high-stakes "game" of kidnap-for-ransom.

We learn that kidnapping has become such a way of life in some quarters that kidnap insurance is built into executives' salary and benefit packages.

When the kidnapping does happen, the rebels make a lot of ideological noises, but, as Crowe's character, astutely points out, the bottom line is really all about money.

The kidnapping case takes all of four months to crack, during which many changes occur in the various characters involved in the case. These psychological changes are interesting in their own right, but they're made even more arresting when they lead to a military resolution to the problem.

Thus, the movie is effective on various levels, and its combination of approaches makes it a constantly involving viewing experience. We end up caring not just for Ryan and Crowe, but also for the other characters who people the movie as well.

Sure, there's some show biz melodrama and action-film gimmickry that distends the movie, but its psychological core remains secure.

LOUIE'S CINEMA

LOUIE'S THX It Will Change The Way You Hear and See Movies Forever

NOW SHOWING

WHAT WOMEN WANT
(PG-13 RT-2:00)
Feb.5-Monday

1:25 PM - What Women Want
3:45 PM - What Women Want
6:05 PM - What Women Want
8:25 PM - What Women Want
10:45 PM - What Women Want

PROOF OF LIFE
Meg Ryan / Russel Crowe
opens Wednesday February 7

Get a copy of the 3rd issue of Pelikula! A Journal of Philippine Cinema and learn more about Comedy King Dolphy and other Filipino artist, Movie fans & idols.

Pelikula is one of the beneficiary projects of the LRP Foundation, published jointly

Hear the Difference, Feel the Excitement

ENTERTAINMENT
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Quickly now — 'sago,' a Gap shop and other belated discoveries

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I'M a belated convert to the Pearl Shake and Milk Tea phenomenon.

Last week, I tried Quickly Taro Milk with *nata* strips and sago balls, as well as their Melon Milk. Both are equally delicious. For the longest time I resisted all the other Pearl Shake concoctions because to my taste buds, they seemed powdery and because they were blended with ice. Each sip was a strain on my throat (overworked because of my talkativeness), and because of the jolting coldness that even gave me a *ngilo* headache. I also found some brands' sago balls gooey. I was convinced that I would never find a variant that I liked, until I found Quickly.

Taro, which, if I'm not mistaken is *gabi*, always struck me as not being appetizing, and "*makati*". In fact, I ignore it when it's in *sinigang*. And when it's in *guinataang halo-halo*, it's not my first priority when scooping the ingredients. (I am partial to the banana, *langka*, *sago*, and the *bilu-bilo*.) But when it's used in the milk drink, it not only lends a nice, lavender color, it also gives a pleasant sweetness that isn't overpowering or cloying. Their sago balls are chewy and firm, and they aren't coffee-like in flavor like the others I've encountered.

The best, though, is the nata. Josh and I love the lychee-flavored little gelatin cups with the nata in the middle, and Quickly's nata has exactly the same flavor as the gelatin cups.

The melon milk is a good approximation of my favorite Magnolia melon milk, but it's a honeydew-green color, and a bit lighter or soupy in texture. I personally prefer the cantaloupe-peachy-orange color of Magnolia's melon milk, but I can live with the existing honeydew green.

Come to think of it, DEC, which is located in Virra Mall and now on Wilson Street, San Juan, has the creamiest melon milk with sago concoction available, and it's in the cantaloupe-melon color I like.

My Tuesday prayer group and I are seriously considering getting a franchise of Quickly, depending on our finding a suitable location we can all agree about. We are all currently obsessed with the pearl milk drink, especially since they have a branch located right across from Baclaran Church, where we go every Tuesday night. (My daily fix comes from either the E. Rodriguez branch across from St. Luke's or the branch in Gilmore, the locations nearest my home.)

Since this is the food portion of this column, I highly recommend you try the dimsum and siopao from HafChang, (I have my pork and shark's fin *siomai*, and my *asado* and *bola-bola siopao* bought from their West Avenue branch since this is the one nearest ABS-CBN and my home, but I've eaten in the Malate branch, and I've passed by a Makati Avenue branch.)

Rajo Laurel was responsible for introducing me to this restaurant chain. I am still fond of Gloria Maris dimsum, and they do have a wider selection, but HafChang is more popularly priced, and still consistently yummy.

* * *

I made another belated discovery, which my fellow Gap, Banana Republic and Old Navy fans might rejoice about.

Late last year, a duly authorized store selling these labels opened on Pasay Road, Makati (If you haven't been there, it's located right above 'Tesoro's). Inquirer has an office right across from @the shop, and my friend Tessa Prieto Valdes had mentioned that I should check it out because I'm a Gap loyalist. (The Inquirer had featured this same store several weeks ago.) It wasn't until a couple of days ago, after a taping in BF Homes Paranaque, that I managed to check it out. The store is well laid out, the merchandise is neatly displayed and within easy reach, and the best part is that they have a good selection of sizes. The stuff they have now is the fall-winter line of Gap and Banana Republic, and they have nice Old Navy boot-leg and flare cut jeans. I am obsessed with denim jackets, and they have one that's soft, comfortably shaped to hug the body, just the right shade of blue, with coppery buttons jacket.

For the men, they have some eye-catching colors of Banana Republic fitted, stretch, button-down shirts. The store staff emphasized to me that their merchandise is original and is what's currently available in the US. Their prices aren't cheap, so don't expect the goods to be similarly priced as the overruns that we saw a lot in the recent Christmas bazaars. But the merchandise was of the highest quality, and I was thrilled when I was handed my packages in genuine blue and white Gap and white and red Old Navy shopping bags.

With the dollar still at a prohibitive level, and travel this year to the United States a doubtful occurrence this year (unless, God willing, I'm invited to a movie junket), @the shop is worth visiting. (Jeans for men and women are currently on sale, 20-50 percent off. New spring-summer merchandise will be on display by the first week of March.)

AYALA CINEMAS
SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENINGS
MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMIITED
BE AMONG THE FIRST TO WATCH
GLENN CLOSE
Disney's 102 DALMATIANS
TODAY @
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
&
GLORIETTA 4 CINEMA

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

1	2	3
102 DALMATIANS 12:50, 2:40, 4:30, 6:20, 8:10, 10:00	VERTICAL LIMIT 1:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00	WHAT WOMEN WANT 11:40, 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00
WHAT WOMEN WANT 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	VERTICAL LIMIT 1:15, 3:50, 6:25, 9:00	THE YARDS 12:00, 2:00, 4:00

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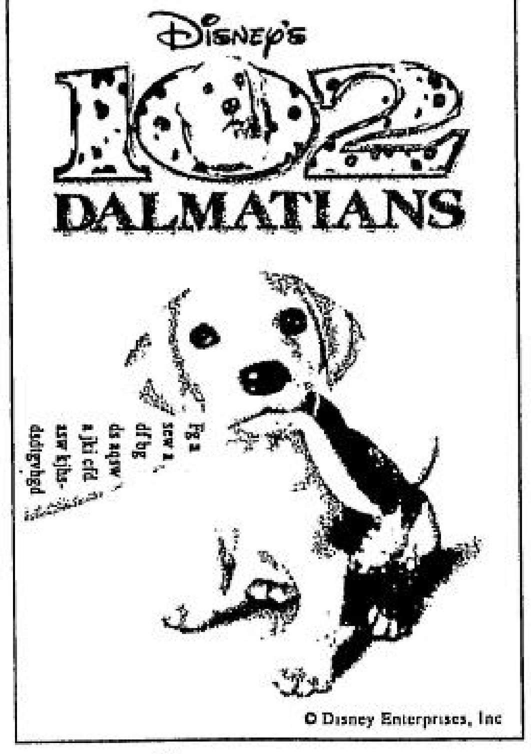
SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENING
GLENN CLOSE

102 DALMATIANS
FEB. 5 (MON) • FEB. 6 (TUE) MTRCB RATING GP

MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum. Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.
SNEAK PREVIEW TODAY!
SEE YOU ON FEB. 14
Disney's 102 DALMATIANS



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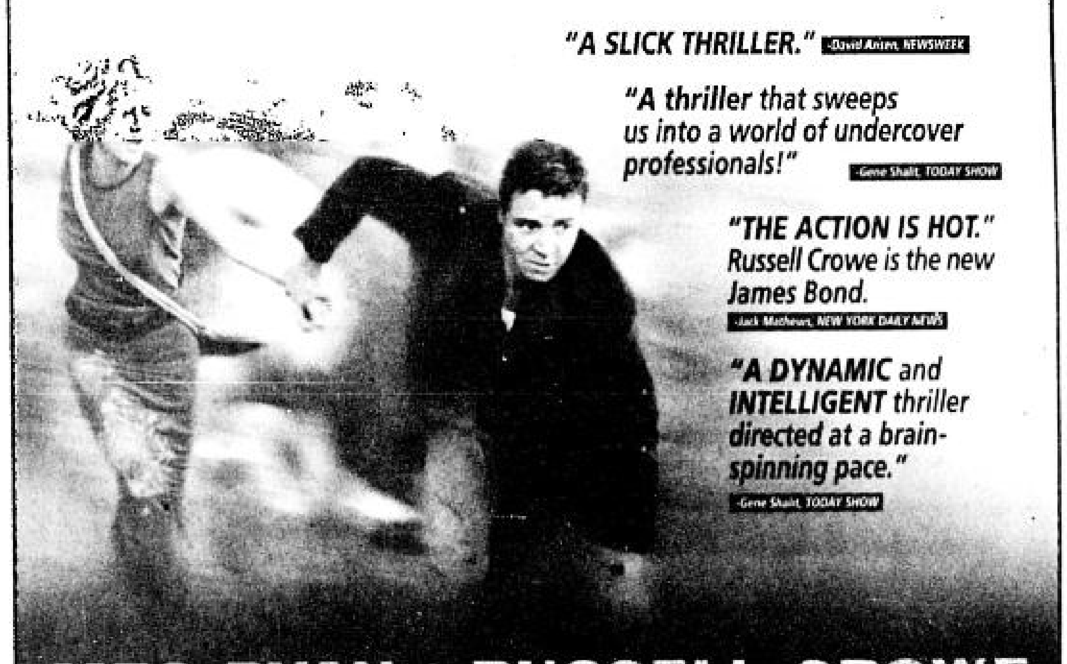
IT will HOLD YOU HOSTAGE on FEB. 7
MTRCB ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
"★★★★ Ryan and Crowe SIZZLE onscreen!" -Victoria Snee, KDAF-TV (DALLAS)
"A SLICK THRILLER." -David Ansen, NEWSWEEK
"A thriller that sweeps us into a world of undercover professionals!" -Gene Shalit, TODAY SHOW
"THE ACTION IS HOT." Russell Crowe is the new James Bond. -Jack Mathews, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
"A DYNAMIC and INTELLIGENT thriller directed at a brain-spinning pace." -Gene Shalit, TODAY SHOW



MEG RYAN | RUSSELL CROWE
A TAYLOR HACKFORD FILM
PROOF OF LIFE
CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BEL-AIR ENTERTAINMENT AN ANVIL FILMS PRODUCTION A TAYLOR HACKFORD FILM MEG RYAN RUSSELL CROWE "PROOF OF LIFE" DAVID MORSE PAMELA REED AND DAVID CARUSO MUSIC BY DANNY ELFMAN PRODUCTION DESIGNED BY BRUNO RUBEO EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STEVEN REUTHER TONY GILROY PRODUCED BY TAYLOR HACKFORD AND CHARLES MULVEHILL WRITTEN BY TONY GILROY DIRECTED BY TAYLOR HACKFORD
89.9 MAGIC 88.3 92.3

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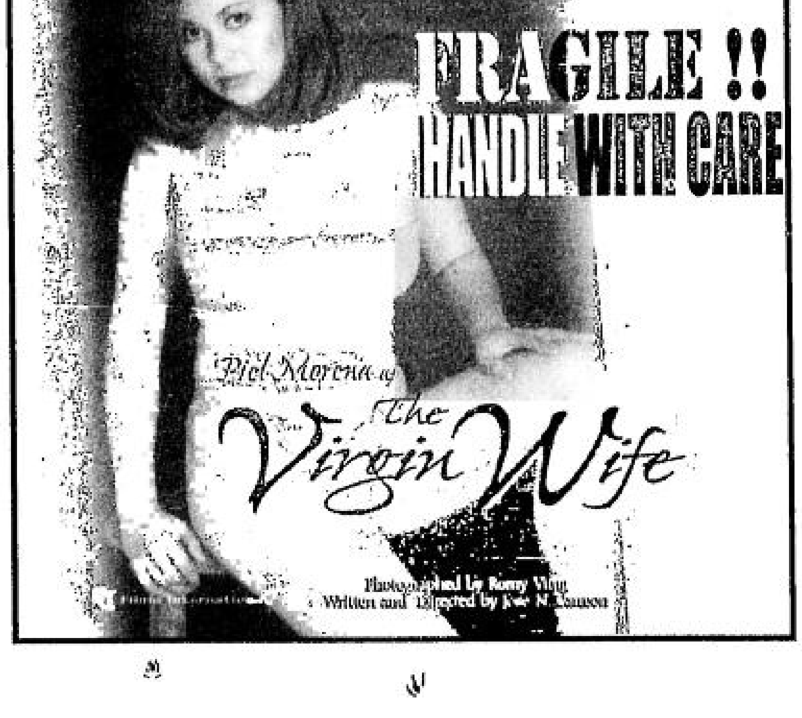
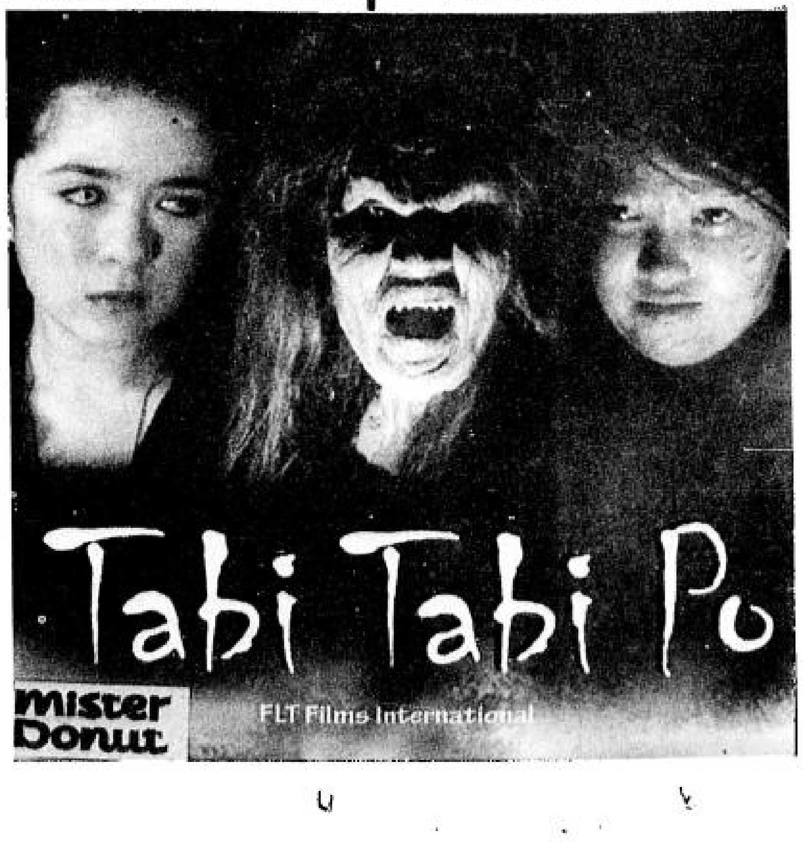


FRAGILE !! HANDLE WITH CARE
The Virgin Wife
Photographed by Romy Vitug
Written and Directed by Joe N. Lauson

LUMUSOB NA ANG MATATANDA,
SUGOD NA TAYONG MGA BATA !!!
SAMA NA SA RALLY NG ENGKANTO AT MALIGNO!
NOW SHOWING!
MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE | ALL AGES ADMITTED



Tabi Tabi Po
Mister Donut
FLT Films International

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SMC proxy fight seen to favor Cojuangco

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Clarissa S. Batino

SAN Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco is expected to remain as chair of the country's largest food and beverage concern unless the Macapagal administration forcibly ejects him out of the Ortigas head office.

This was the forecast of former Executive Secretary Edgardo J. Angara who said that Cojuangco would have the edge in a potential proxy fight in San Miguel's annual stockholders' meeting because of his control of management.

However, Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo is expecting the opposite.

Romulo said Cojuangco, fondly referred to as the "Boss" by his subordinates, risks losing his top post as well as his virtual 47-percent control in the country's biggest food and beverage company.

"Assuming that the entire 47 percent reverts to the state, it is up to the government to hire the best possible manager other than Cojuangco. Why hire him if there are better managers," Romulo said.

Angara, who was once a director of San Miguel under the leadership of the late Andres Soriano Jr., said management has traditionally had a strong control of proxy solicitations because of the diverse ownership of San Miguel.

"The Sorianos had less than 10-percent stake in the company but year after year, they have been able to maintain control of San Miguel's board and management," Angara said. "Whoever is in the saddle usually has the edge in getting the proxy votes."

Angara said the government could not force a boardroom shakeup at San Miguel because it did not have enough shares to get the majority of the 15-member board.

He said the government has at best 47-percent share in San Miguel—27 percent held by the Presidential Commission on Good Government and 10 percent each held by the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System.

In contrast, Cojuangco can still vote his 20-percent interest in the company and he is widely expected to generate enough proxy votes to remain as San Miguel chair considering the company's sterling performance since he took over in mid-1998.

"It's like night and day," said one investment banker when he compared San Miguel's accomplishment in the Soriano and Cojuangco eras.

However, Romulo said even this 20 percent would be questioned by the new administration in a legal study being prepared by Avelino Cruz, head of the Presidential Legal Staff.

With the proxy votes, Angara said Cojuangco could nominate the majority of the board members and retain his position. Cojuangco was able to take back control of San Miguel after a 14-year hiatus when Andres Soriano III left the post shortly after President Estrada was elected to Malacañang.

Angara noted that the Macapagal

SMC/ B6

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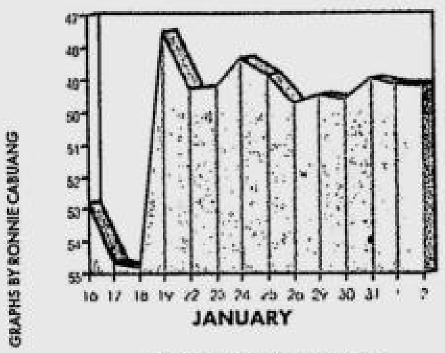
CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY RONNIE CABUANG

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱49.12 = $1

As of 5 p.m.,
Feb. 2, 2001

¥115.18 = $1

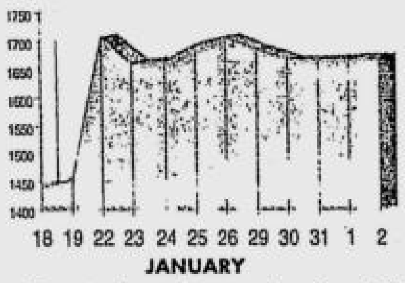
The US dollar was trading at 115.18 as of 5 p.m.,
Feb. 2, 2001

GOLD:$267.80/268.30

per ounce Hong Kong,
Feb. 2, 2001

STOCK MARKET

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Stocks to rise

SHARE prices may rise further this week, adding on to the main index's 13-percent gain in January, as a decline in borrowing costs could help companies expand their businesses and boost consumer spending, stock analysts said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas cut key interest rates to match a reduction in the United States last week. That brings the overnight lending and borrowing rates down half a percentage point, starting today.

"Prospects are getting brighter, and any weakness is a buying sign for us," said Astro del Castillo, head of research at A&A Securities Inc.

STOCKS/ B6

ETPI sees $46-M revenues

EASTERN Telecommunications Philippines Inc. has set a target of $46 million in revenues for 2001 as its data business grows and its foreign strategic partner sets new directions for the company.

Angelo C. Molato, ETPI chief operating officer, said the company was expecting half of the revenue target to come from its Internet and data businesses.

"The principal direction of the company this year will still be the Internet. Voice will still be there but it would be more of Internet and data," Molato said.

He said 30 percent of the target will come from the traditional voice service, 20 percent from national long distance and international long distance, 30 percent from data services mainly through leased lines, and 20 percent from Internet services such as its fiber optic Gigabit access and the high speed asynchronous digital subscriber line (ADSL) service.

The official also said there was synergy with the new foreign partner, Australian Gigahertz Network Inc., with regard to the Internet and data businesses.

In the last quarter of 2000, ETPI also started upgrading available equipment in order to offer Web hosting and data center services. Molato said there was no budget allotted for the data center yet for this year because the company was still working out the upgrade plan with IBM Philippines.

Last week the board of directors of ETPI appointed a new chair as a result of the shift of the majority control of the company to AGNI.

According to an internal memo, Emiliano P. Jurado relinquished his position as chair to AGN's Richard Freyer.

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DOTC to allow 2nd flag carrier

BY ANTHONY O. ALCANTARA

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications said it might designate soon another official flag carrier aside from Philippine Airlines Inc. to promote healthy competition in the industry that would benefit the public.

Transport and Communications Secretary Pantaleon D. Alvarez said the Civil Aeronautics Board would not hesitate to designate a second official flag carrier if the application would meet all the requirements.

"We are promoting the designation of more than one carrier in our air services agreement. So in the very near future we can look forward to having another airline carrying the Philippine flag in regional and international routes," he said.

He added that the CAB has been reviewing the application of the Gokongwei-owned Cebu Pacific Air for a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) for international scheduled and unscheduled flights.

"Now we see Cebu Pacific, Air Philippines, Asian Spirit and Mindanao Express competing in most of Philippine Airlines' routes and even providing air services in smaller airports and missionary routes," he said.

In an earlier interview, CAB executive director Emmanuel Noel A. Cruz said Cebu Pacific should first prove that it has concrete plans to fly to international routes before it could be given the authority.

"They should have the planes. They have to invest in it," he said. He added that the DC-9s of Cebu Pacific were suitable only for domestic flights.

Despite the company's announcement last year that it was acquiring 15 Boeing 717s for its ré-fleeting program, no delivery has been made yet.

Cebu Pacific president Lance Y. Gokongwei said the company was still negotiating for the planes since it still had to acquire the necessary permits and be designated as a second official flag carrier.

He likened it to the "chicken or egg" situation, saying that it was important for Cebu Pacific to be designated as a flag carrier first before it would continue negotiations for the planes, while the CAB wanted us to acquire the aircraft first.

Cebu Pacific was given a CPCN for scheduled international flights in 1996 and was scheduled to fly to Hong Kong in 1997. However, the onslaught of the Asian financial crisis prevented the company from pushing through with its plans. Cebu Pacific has to renew the CPCN for scheduled flights.

Commercial banks' bad loans hit 16.23%

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE COMMERCIAL banking sector's bad loans rose to 16.23 percent of the total loan portfolio as of end-November last year, from 15.73 percent in the previous month, as rising interest rates gave many borrowers a hard time in meeting their debt servicing obligations.

However, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which had said the banks' non-performing loans ratio would peak at 16 percent, said it would check its numbers again before coming up with the official figures.

In November 1999, the NPL ratio of commercial banks had averaged at 14.61 percent of their loan portfolio.

A BSP official explained the economic slowdown and flat demand for credit resulted in the banks' loan portfolio.

Higher interest payments made it harder for borrowers to pay their obligations on time. Thus, more loans were classified past due or non-performing.

NPLs refer to loans whose principal and interest remained unpaid for 30 days or more after due date.

The BSP, in early October, increased its key policy rates by four percentage points after applying a percentage-point increase in May and September.

The October rate hike and the four-percentage-point increase in the banks' reserve requirement were meant to siphon off excess liquidity from the system. The BSP suspected that the excess liquidity was used by certain quarters to speculate against the peso.

Banks, as a result, also increased their lending rates by about seven percentage points to 21 percent.

Slapped with higher interest rates, more loans became past due in succeeding months.

The 3.5-percentage point reduction in the BSP's overnight rates recently should also bring down bank lending rates and make it easier for clients to cope with interest payments.

The BSP noted that the strict guidelines governing the restructuring of loans under Circular 246 further pushed the banks' NPL ratio higher.

Under the guidelines, banks can no longer conceal non-performing loans through restructuring which made past due loans appear current.

The BSP pointed out that despite the increase, the ratio of bad loans of the local banking industry was still lower compared to that of Thailand at 35.6 percent and Indonesia, at 69 percent.

The BSP had expected that the banks' NPLs would stabilize at lower than 15 percent of total portfolio.

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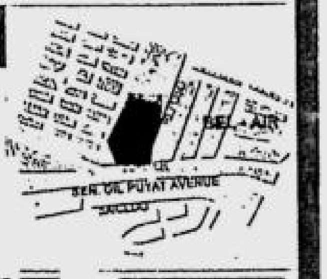

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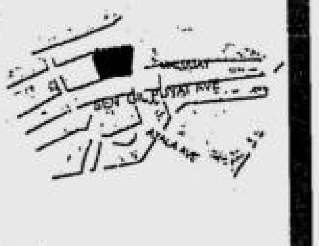

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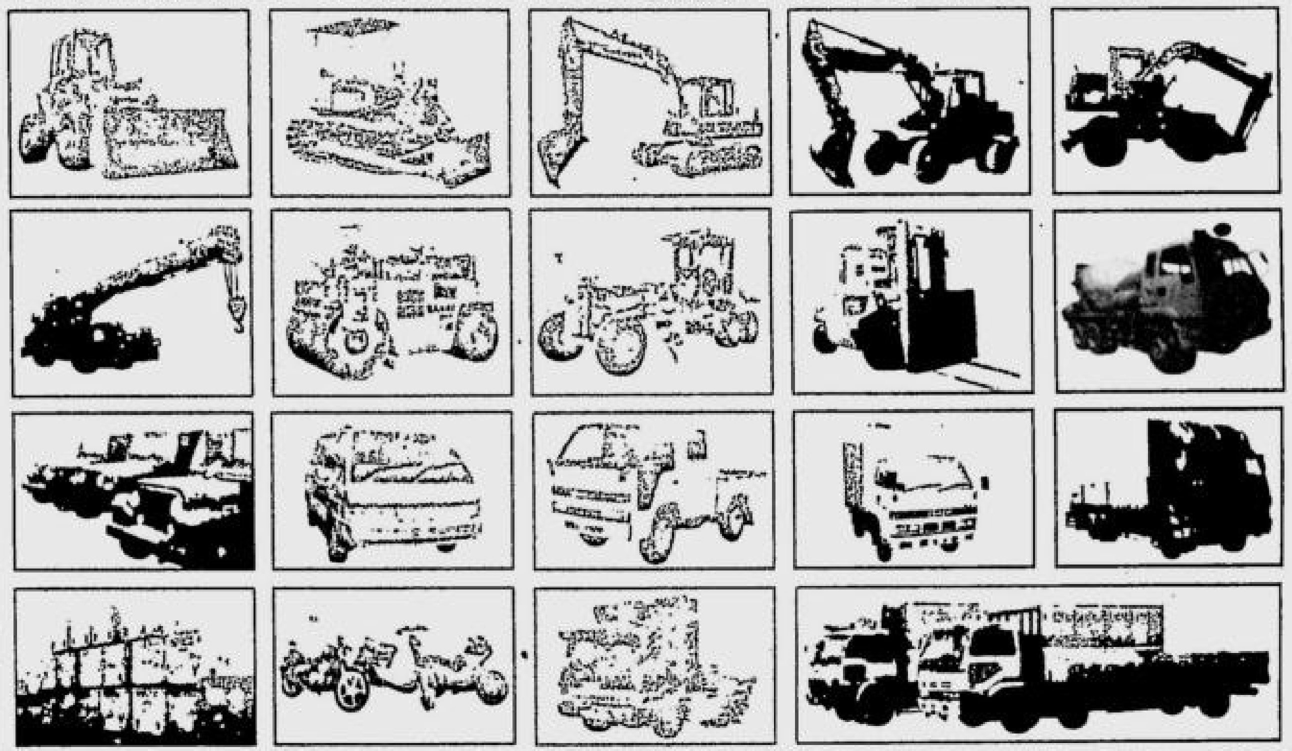

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- **Engr. Gerardo Parco** is an Assistant Professor in the Environmental Engineering Graduate Program of the College of Engineering, University of the Philippines-Diliman, as well as Board Member of the Philippine Institute of Chemical Engineers (PIChE) and the UP Alumni Engineers.
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Go selling some stake in lender

THE GO family has agreed to sell a portion of their stake in Equitable PCI Bank Inc., the country's No. 3 lender, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura has said.

Buenaventura said the Equitable PCI Bank board instructed its financial advisors, ING Barings and JP Morgan Chase & Co. Inc., to look for a strategic partner that would infuse new capital into the bank.

The Go family's decision to hold on to their stake has prompted the country's top two banks—Bank of the Philippine Islands and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.—to re-think their plans to acquire Equitable PCI Bank.

That left US-based Newbridge Capital Inc. and Spain's Banco Santander Central Hispano as the only parties interested in the Equitable PCI Bank bloc.

With the 31-percent stake of the Go family out of the selling block, Equitable PCI Bank can now offer only the 37 percent held by state pension funds Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System. The SSS owns 25 percent of the bank while GSIS holds 12 percent.

One person familiar with the situation said the Go family believed the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada had lifted Equitable PCI Bank's negative image as a result of its involvement in the former chief executive's Senate corruption trial.

Anti-Estrada groups had asked the public to boycott Equitable PCI Bank for holding on to accounts allegedly used by Estrada to hold funds he supposedly obtained from illegal gambling sources.

The bank, however, also provided key pieces of evidence and a witness that linked Estrada to the so-called Jose Velarde accounts. The accounts contained millions of pesos that prosecutors in the former president's impeachment trial said came from gambling syndicates.

The central bank agreed that pressure on Equitable PCI Bank had eased. The bank was said to be no longer experiencing heavy withdrawals. *Clarissa S. Batino*

SSS keeps Meralco equities

THE SOCIAL Security System said it would keep its investments in Manila Electric Co.

"Meralco is part of our portfolio investments that we would rather keep because it is very liquid. As a pension fund, we need these portfolio investments to balance our cash flows," new SSS administrator and president Vitaliano Nanagas II said.

The SSS owns 4 percent of the country's biggest distributor of electricity.

The national government has been unloading its Meralco shares to bridge its budget deficit. It owns 5 percent of Meralco.

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This series on Philippine banking history is published in the **business section** of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in commemoration of the 150th year of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), formerly *El Banco Español Filipino de Isabel 2* (The Spanish Filipino Bank of Isabel II), the first bank to be established in the Philippines and Southeast Asia.

PHILIPPINE BANKING

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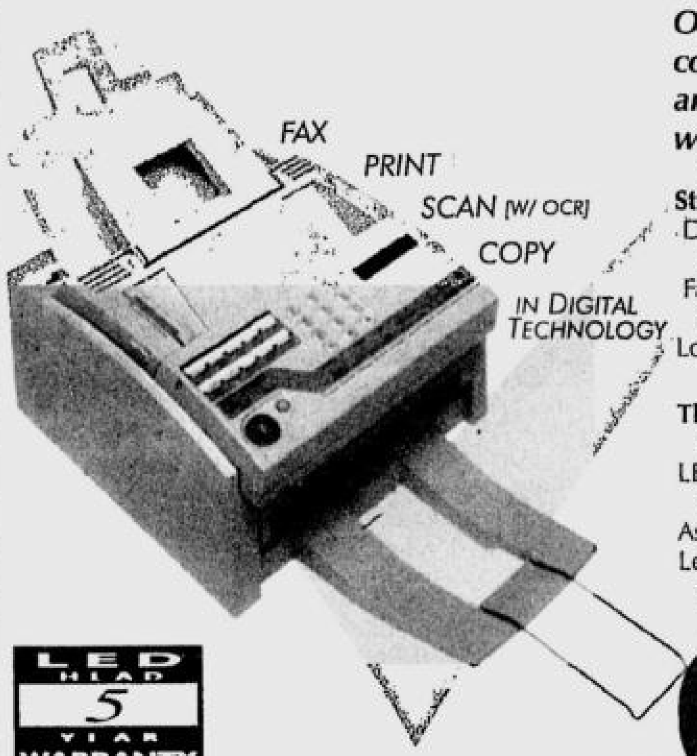
...that although the first bank in the Philippines, originally called *El Banco Español Filipino de Isabel 2*, had printed its first bank note as early as 1852, it was not until after the approval of its by-laws, confirmed in a royal decree from the Spanish central government in Madrid dated October 17, 1854, that the bank was able to formally exercise its privilege to issue paper money to the general public?

...that the *pesos fuertes*, as the first bank notes in the Philippines were called, could be redeemed in Mexican coins in gold or silver?

...that Mexican coins (brought in via the galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco in Mexico) had been in circulation, though on a limited scale, in the Philippine islands prior to the formal establishment of *El Banco Español Filipino de Isabel 2* in 1851?

150



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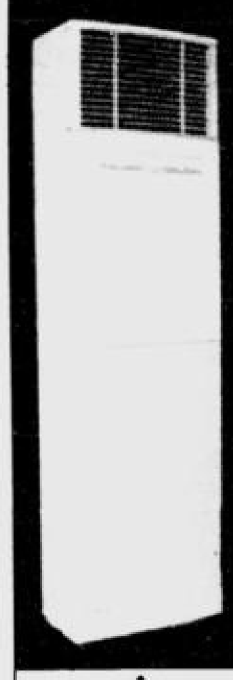

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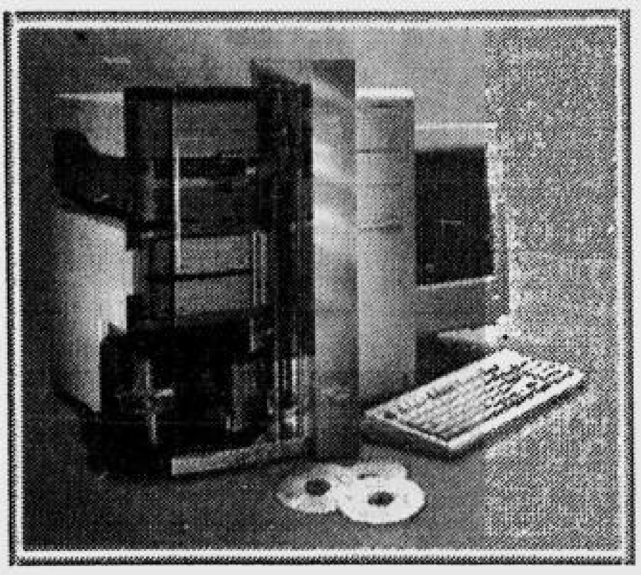

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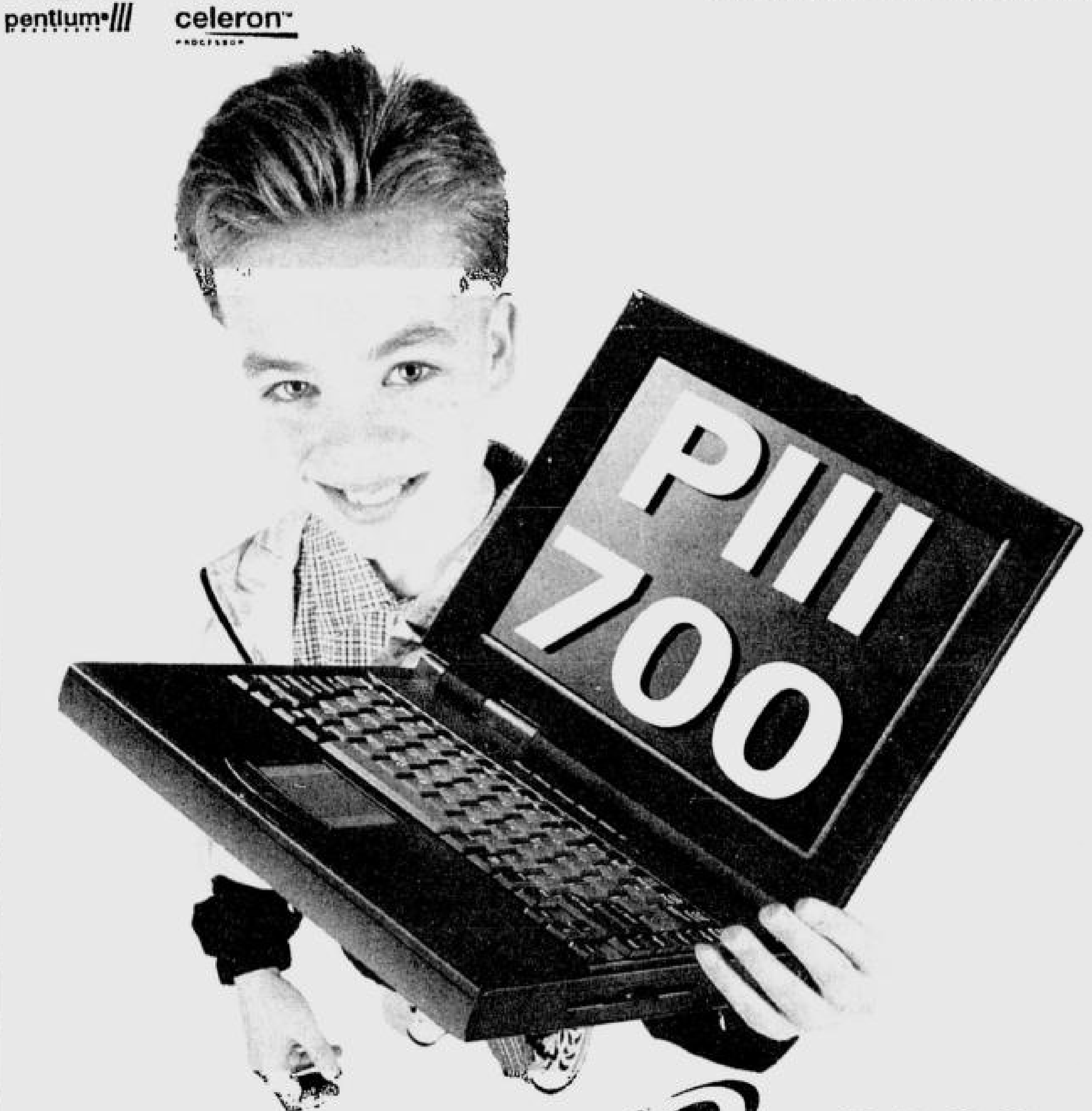

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Gov't urged to control entry of cheap imports

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PHILIPPINE Phosphate Fertilizer Corp., the country's leading fertilizer supplier, is asking the government to clamp down on cheap fertilizer allegedly being dumped from China.

Philphos chair Jose Ch. Alvarez claimed that fertilizer imports from China were being brought here at P125,000 per ton versus the P150,000 production cost. Dumping is an illegal market practice wherein a commodity is sold in a foreign market at prices much lower than those prevailing in the home market.

Alvarez alleged that Chinese importers were selling their fertilizer at P110 per bag, which has allowed them to gain substantial market share from Philphos which is selling its products at P125 per bag.

Philphos still controls a dominant 70 percent of the local market but imports are fast increasing their market share as even local fertilizer giant Atlas Fertilizer Corp. has resorted to selling imports, according to Alvarez.

Aside from seeking an anti-dumping bond against unfair foreign imports, Alvarez said Philphos would appeal to the government to raise duties on fertilizer from 3 percent to 20 percent.

The tariff hike is meant to shield Philphos while Alvarez and his partner, the Republic of Nauru, modernize and expand the plant's facilities. Alvarez, who plans to cough up P500 million into Philphos, has vowed to make the company a profit-making venture within three years.

Philphos is building a firmer foundation in the local market in order to enhance its competitiveness overseas, which remains as the company's primary market. Roughly 70 percent of its project yearly output of a million metric tons are shipped to Asean countries and Australia.

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of Guoco Holdings (Philippines), Inc. will be held on 20 February 2001 at 2:00 p.m. at the Penthouse, BA-Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

(Sgd.) Atty. Daisy L. Parker
Corporate Secretary

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ON THE MONEY

John Mangun

INDIVIDUAL stock prices continued to hold at or near their longer-term resistance levels last week. The current trading is very important as the future direction could go either way. If prices go higher (even 10 percent would be nice), then we have a true rally in place. But prices could also retreat and then we are looking for a fall to support of 1,530-1,570. The Phisix is up by about 13 percent since Jan. 19th. That is a reasonable increase although it only just breaks above a negative trend channel going back to the first quarter of 1999.

Viewing the long, long term parameters, the stock market is turning. Indicators that look beyond months are poised to give a buying signal that we have not seen since 1998. One of two scenarios will unfold if we are at the start of a major market uptrend. Over the next months, prices will gradually work their way higher but only that 10 percent or so that I mentioned earlier. That will put the Phisix at 1,800+.

Heavy, heavy resistance lies ahead at 1,700-1,750.

That is why we are sluggish right now. Alternatively, prices will stay in a narrow range, irritating the long-term holders and allowing short-term traders to make a few bucks. My calculations are that it would take 30 to 45 days of prices holding above the 1,650 area for a strong buying signal to flash. This signal, however, would only be a short-term signal that could disappear quickly. Ninety days above 1,650 and then we have a certain long term buy.

I would be looking at the core companies for the next six months. These include SM Prime (SMPH), Meralco (MERB), and Ayala Corp. (AC). San Miguel (SMC) is still the favorite unless politics alters the future of SMC. The re-acquisition of Coca-Cola Philippines is stupendous and I hope it works.

However, a change in corporate leadership and all bets are off.

The property companies have potential but are speculative. Why would you want to buy these companies? First, buying these is a long-term interest rate play. Forget about the 91-day treasury bills and look to the 182-day interest rates. This T-bill will set the trend. A 75 to 100 basis point fall in the next six weeks and we have lending rates at a very attractive level. Certainly, what the Federal Reserve in the US does will set the world tone. There is little doubt in my mind that the Fed will drop by another 75-100 basis points before June if not sooner. The US is in deep economic trouble.

Secondly, the property sector is an interesting play if President Macapagal-Arroyo decides to prime the economic pump through housing. If she can stop the nonsense between the real estate sector and the national government on a public financing scheme for homebuyers, something good might eventually happen.

I have no particular favorites in the property sector although if I had to buy one stock it would be CMP. When Megaworld (MEG) makes its decision on Fairmont Holdings (FAIR), things will be better for this stock. However, it is certainly a good buy right now. Empire East (ELI) has a great deal of potential when economic growth goes back to pre-impeachment levels.

For a pure speculative play, International Container Services (ICT) is back at P1.30 with a P2 short-term potential. Money is flowing into this stock and it might be the winner of this first quarter.

At the Philippine Stock Exchange (not the stock market), I see little changing the current negative course. I presented some of the new rules of the SEC last week only to find out it looks like they are going to change again. Stockbrokers were supposed to deposit funds to cover any negative exposure in their daily transactions. Now it appears the SEC will allow brokers to run with a negative exposure of one million or less and set up a PSE trust fund to cover everyone's small exposure.

I have no problems with this change but even after all this time, the PSE and SEC are still making up the rules as we go along. It is practical and pragmatic, but when is it going to end? In the meantime, existing rules are not being followed or enforced.

The PSE requires that all transaction be paid and settled within three days. This is the "T+3 Rule."

Yet, in an effort to attract new clients, one prominent brokerage firm is allowing its customers to pay only after 10 days. This is blatantly against the rules. Yet the PSE or the SEC is not aware of this violation or if so, choose not to investigate.

The list of continuing broker violations goes on and on. Some firms would never think of having their "stockbrokers" licensed because it costs money. Others continue to play the market against their own clients by "short selling" and "front running." Some other firms extend margin trading way beyond the specifics of the law found in the Securities Regulation Code.

If PSE member firms are going to ignore and break the regulations and rules now on the books, why waste the time and trouble to come up with new ones. It is pointless. If brokers are not going to obey the rules, new regulations will continue to give only the appearance of investor protection and I believe that is worse. Personally, I have no problems with a "Wild West" stock market as long as every investor knows he better be wearing his own six-shooter. Because the sheriff looks real helpless against the bad guys.

(John Mangun can be reached at Fax No. 634-2349 or e-mail at jm@epic.net.)

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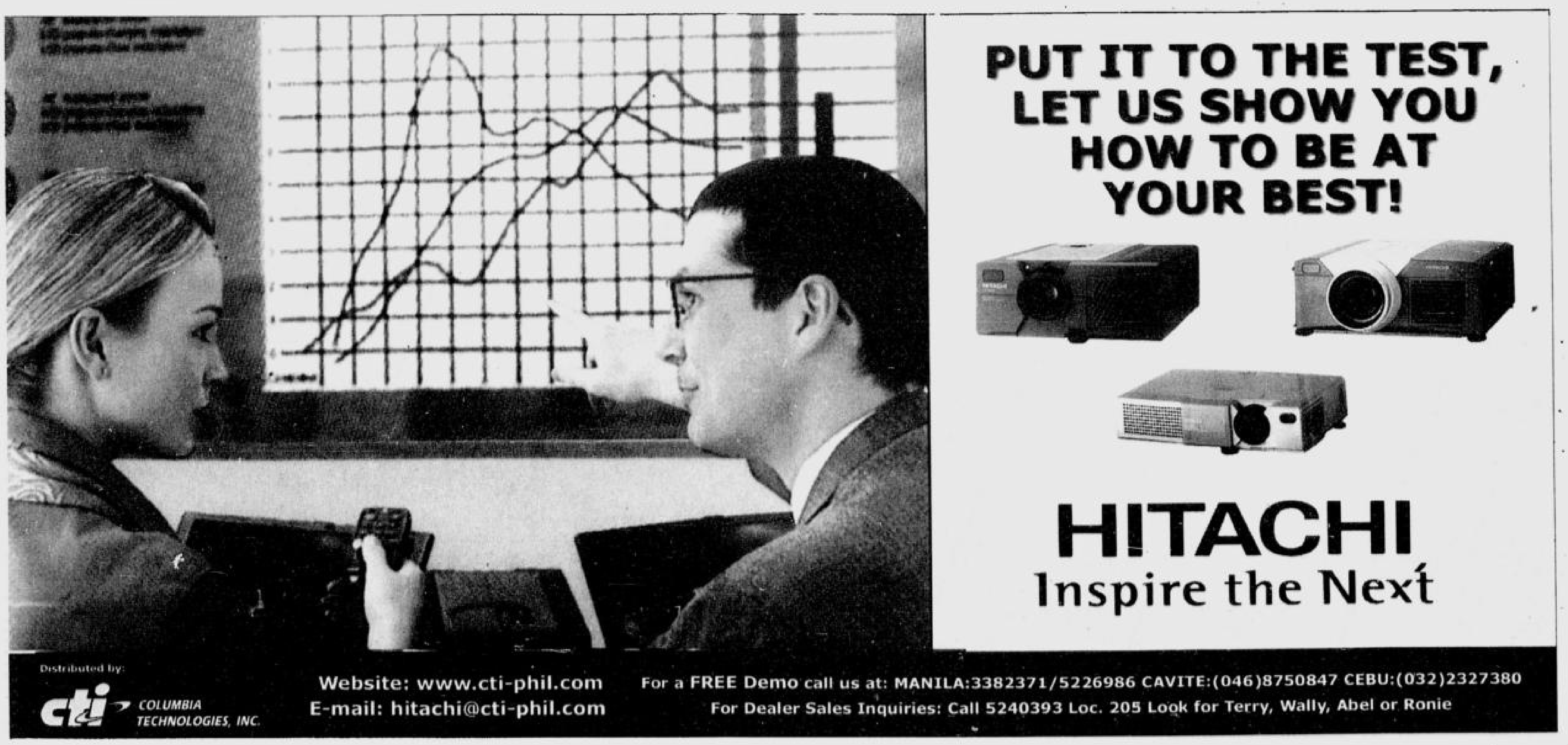

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Good riddance

COCKTALES

By Victor C. Agustin

THE ERAP-APPOINTED board of the Cultural Center of the Philippines have quietly turned in their resignations to Malacañang, in order to avoid a repeat of the fish vendors' quarrel with the Ramos-appointed board who resisted the Erap appointees with the changeover in 1998.

Ironically, the much-publicized wranglings proved to be a blessing in disguise for the CCP.

In order to help its appointees, the Estrada administration finally released the P225-million CCP share in amusement tax and tobacco inspection fees that had been withheld from the CCP since 1986.

That infusion pulled the CCP out of the financial black hole that it had steadily sunk into over years of operating at a loss.

The roaring commercial success of Miss Saigon, underwritten by big business and Erap cronies, also plowed in profits to the perennial money-losing institution.

In its farewell report, the Gloria Angara-Mita Rufino board reported total cash and investment balance of P110.8 million as of end-2000. From previous yearly losses, the CCP finally registered a net income of P45.4 million last year.

Over at the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, the country's de facto embassy to Taiwan, the holdover staff were surprised and hurt when they reported for work Thursday at their Salcedo Village office and found it padlocked.

The undiplomatic maneuver was foisted upon despite a previous understanding with GMA's appointee, Isabel Golamco, from outgoing chair, former Sen. Eva Estrada Kalaw, assuring "the same smooth and lawful transition extended to us by the previous board."

Blazing good-bye

INVESTMENT Ombudsman Florecita Flores has ended her short stint in government in a literal blaze.

Flores' house in Parañaque burned down on the very same night that the 11 Jose Cohorts in the Senate voted against opening the second Jose Velarde envelope, the spark that ignited Edsa II and brought down the Estrada administration.

In addition to losing her hard-earned home, Flores also lost all her four cars/vehicles. She is now reduced to living in the backyard annex of her gutted home.

With the change in government, Flores has decided to hand in her irrevocable resignation so she could concentrate on recouping her lost lifetime savings.

Spanish spoils

!OYE!

There is an ongoing tug-of-war within the Department of Agriculture/Buredu of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources as to which undersecretary—ironically involving both Angara holdovers—should chair the bidding for the $40-million purchase of Spanish patrol boats.

The purchase is part of a tied loan extended by the Spanish government to Manila.

After the bid shall have been awarded to the favored Spanish bidder, the lucky DA official and his team will fly to Madrid—all-expenses paid, *naturalmente*—for the turnover ceremonies.

Short takes

● THE INQUIRER'S market share for January jumped to 60 percent, according to the front office. The No. 2 and No. 3 English broadsheets in turn accounted for 19 and 17 percent, respectively.

The remaining dailies shared the balance of 4 percent.

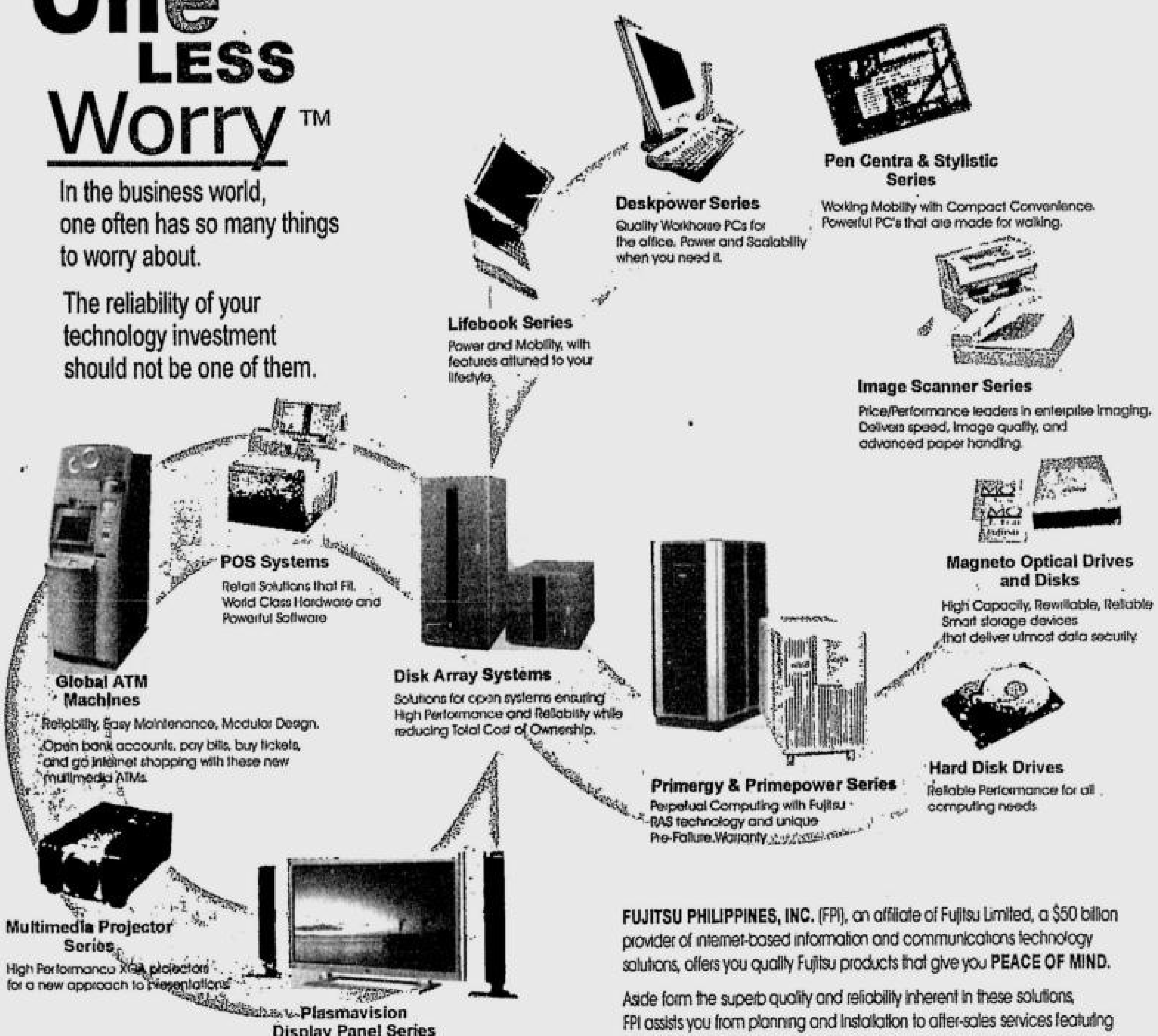
● IT looks like RCBC Plaza could use a little People Power push itself.

The new Yuchengco monument is scheduled to be inaugurated this evening, yet as of Saturday afternoon, workers were still pouring concrete on the Ayala-side pedestrian walkway and installing the walkway awnings on the same side of the new building.

Heard through the grapevine

A GROUP of disgruntled investors of Splendido, the golf and country club controlled by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, are planning a class-action suit against the Cagayan solon for his failure to develop the Tagaytay resort.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)



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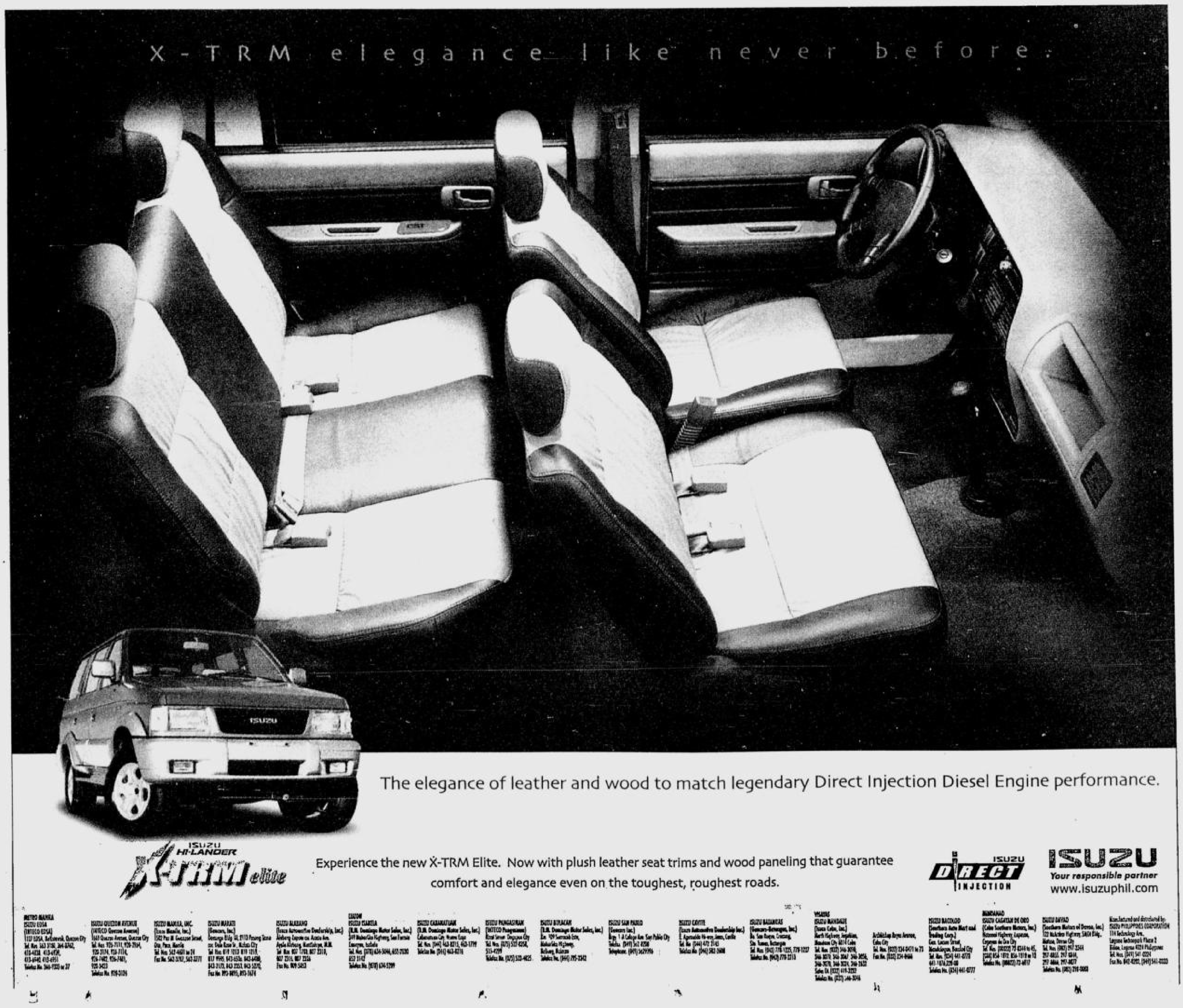

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Market enters consolidation phase as euphoria dies down

BY DORIS C. DUMLAO

AFTER a cycle of buying-binge and profit-taking amid the euphoria over a change in the country's political leadership, the stock market has entered the consolidation phase, as it awaits more solid proofs of economic recovery.

"Although sentiment has changed for the better, it has yet to be transformed into action. As we have been observing, the market volumes have been steadily decreasing. What the market needs now are tangible signs and hard economic figures to provide direction, the better if the tangible signs and economic figures show improvements that will validate the improved sentiment of the market," AB Capital & Investment Corp. analyst Tommy Villanueva said.

MARKET PLAY

On Friday, the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index closed at 1,669.58 points, losing 2.26 percent week-on-week. The index was weighed down by a slump in the property and banking sectors, which fell 3.06 percent and 2.41 percent, respectively, last week despite the announced reduction in US and local interest rates.

Analysts said the cuts in interest rate did not have much impact as these were already factored in by the market.

Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Roxas said the market was consolidating, with the next support at 1,650 points.

Web-based Philstocks.net also believes the market will move range-bound in the coming days, reflective of the lack of any solid direction.

"We believe that the long-awaited catalyst has already put a floor under the market, but we need earnings and economic development to complement the change in leadership for the market to go substantially higher from here. The near-term picture is poor, but investors are telegraphing fundamental improvements not that far down the road," Philstocks.net said.

"Clearly, the fundamental situation and the political concerns are real and not going to turn around right away, but there's a huge pool of cash that is ready to go to work. We just need to bring back the confidence, which was lost last year when investors lost a lot of money in the market," it said.

AB Capital's Villanueva said investors' attention would likely be focused on second-liners in the coming days, noting the sharp gains posted by Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. and SPI Technologies Inc. on Friday. These two issues rose 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively, to end the week at P0.72 and P11.75.

"We feel that, in the coming weeks, more second-line issues will become more active, especially as interest rates continue to move downwards. Lately, we've been hearing speculation on the index reaching 2,000 by June," Villanueva said.

Among the second liners recommended by Villanueva were real estate developer Filinvest Land Inc., construction firm EEI Corp. and port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc.

He also said there were still some buying opportunities for blue-chip stocks SM Prime Holdings Inc., Ayala Land Inc. and Meralco B.

Meanwhile, last week's trading reflected investors' worries about the economy and corporate profits in months ahead. Many were expecting weak reports for the fourth quarter this year and for the first two quarters this year.

"We believe that the best time to buy is while economic activity and earnings are flat but are about to turn up. There may be some opportunities that could be lost when you buy once a recovery is already evident. Since the short-term picture is still rocky, we would push for value stocks rather than growth stocks," Philstocks.net said.

PSE to tighten backdoor listing rules

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange is reviewing its rules on removing dormant companies.

In a news briefing, PSE president Ramon Garcia said the local bourse was pursuing efforts to reactivate dormant companies—those whose shares were hardly being traded—or boot them out of the stock market.

Garcia told reporters the stock exchange was taking a look at dormant issues to determine which among them could stay.

"They have to justify why they won't be delisted," he said.

Dormant firms in the stock exchange have become favorite targets of large companies wanting to list shares without going through an initial public offering.

In recent years, IPOs have failed dismally because of the lack of investor interest in publicly traded stocks.

To avoid expenses and risks associated with an IPO, big companies like Philippine Airlines Inc. acquired majority stake in companies already listed—but rarely traded—in the stock exchange.

PAL, a company controlled by beer and tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan, gained entry by acquiring Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.

Since he assumed office in May last year, Garcia has advocated tighter rules on backdoor listing.

He favors reactivating dormant firms that can formulate viable business plans.

Garcia has said he is not in favor of banning backdoor listing, conceding that it will always be part of the equities market, but he wants to bar companies from using it as a way of avoiding IPOs.

Garcia, meanwhile, appealed to state pension funds Government Service and Insurance System and Social Security System to change their trading scheme to spread out market orders to a greater number of bourse members.

He said market transactions of these pension funds in the past always appeared to favor only a few stockbrokerages that, he said, was detrimental to ongoing efforts to promote a level playing field in the market.

The SSS and GSIS are two of the most liquid and potent institutional investors in the country. They have been instrumental in some merger and acquisition deals involving large corporations, including Equitable PCI Bank Inc.

Market players are also under the impression that the two pension funds are sometimes being used by the government to influence the stock market.

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Canyonwoods	-	400,000
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SMC proxy fight . . .

(From page B1)

administration could not unseat Cojuangco before the company's annual stockholders' meeting (where the entire board is up for election) unless he voluntarily yields his post.

The Macapagal administration has been moving to get control of San Miguel out of Cojuangco's hands with its recent decision to take back the voting rights of the 27 percent granted by the previous government to Cojuangco.

Cojuangco could have firmed up his control of San Miguel with the implementation of compromise deal on the coconut levy shares under the Estrada administration, but President Macapagal-Arroyo has swiftly stopped its implementation when she assumed office on Jan. 20.

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Forest Hills A & B	260,000	Alabang B	1.650M
Sherwood B	390,000	Manila Polo	2.7M
Manila Golf Ind/Corp	15M/17.5M	Southwood A/B	850T/900T
Highland Club/Golf	510T/1.2M	Orchard A/B	290T/400T
		Sta. Elena A/B	1.9M/2M
		Highland Club/Golf	490T/1.1M
		Midlands	880,000

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AS OF FEBRUARY 2, 2001

		SELLING	BUYING
1.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,600,000	1,500,000
2.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,650,000	1,600,000
3.	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	700,000
4.	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	150,000	100,000
5.	CAMP JOHN HAY	400,000	320,000
6.	CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	850,000	
7.	CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	120,000	
8.	CELEBRITY CLUB	220,000	200,000
9.	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	490,000	450,000
10.	CLUB FILIPINO	340,000	320,000
11.	EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	250,000	220,000
12.	EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	400,000	350,000
13.	EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	130,000	
14.	FAIRWAYS & BLUEWATER	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
15.	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	300,000	280,000
16.	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	550,000	
17.	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	600,000	
18.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	500,000	400,000
19.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	500,000	
20.	MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	15,500,000	
21.	MANILA POLO CLUB		2,600,000
22.	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	1,000,000	850,000
23.	MANILA YACHT CLUB	650,000	
24.	METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	170,000	
25.	METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	200,000	160,000
26.	MT MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	600,000	
27.	MT MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (CORP)	900,000	
28.	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	Pls. Call	280,000
29.	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
30.	ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
31.	QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	240,000	
32.	RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	290,000	
33.	RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	600,000	500,000
34.	ROYAL NORTHWOODS	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
35.	STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB "A"		1,700,000
36.	SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	500,000	
37.	SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (CORP)	800,000	
38.	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L. GOLF CLUB		1,100,000
39.	TAGAYTAY MIDLAND	900,000	
40.	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	160,000	
41.	VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	350,000	
42.	WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB		7,300,000

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Stocks to rise

(From page B1)

Shares closed flat Friday as investors largely ignored the central bank's cut in its key overnight rates, opting to wait instead for signals on how corporates are faring under the low interest rate environment.

The 33-share main index edged up 0.45 point, or 0.03 percent, to close at 1,669.58 after choppy trades in a tight range of only about 17 points.

Although the market closed higher, losers outpaced gainers, 57 to 39, indicating that trades were generally mixed.

The index lost 38.60 points, or 2.26 percent, week on week as the market euphoria from the transfer of power to President Macapagal-Arroyo on Jan. 20 died down.

"This is a correction (in the index), but it is considered healthy," said Warren Chua of Mercantile Securities.

"It remains to be seen how these companies will be able to perform this year, corporate recovery will not happen overnight even with the rate cuts," Chua said.

AFP, Bloomberg

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of February 2, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.00	7	7	7	8,000
Banco Filipino Sav & Mort	130.0	130	130	130	1,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70.00	70.5	69.5	70	426,300
China Banking Corp.	750.0	750	750	750	30
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	57.00	57	56.5	56.5	62,400
First E-Bank Corp.	2.00	2	2	2	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	236.0	236	232	234	41,300
Philippine National Bank	32.50	35.5	32.5	34.5	576,000
Phil. Savings Bank	29.00	30	29	30	20,900
Security Bank Corp.	26.50	26.5	26.5	26.5	35,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	32.00	32	32	32	5,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.6	1.6	116,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	.4000	.4	.39	.39	130,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1320	1340	1320	1340	7,490
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1120	1135	1120	1135	8,500
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	47.50	47.5	47.5	47.5	14,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	.6500	.72	.65	.72	33,990,000
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	2.20	2.2	2.2	2.2	3,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	720.0	725	720	725	70
Island Info and Tech Inc.	.0600	.0625	.055	.0575	20,600,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	.4600	.46	.45	.45	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	4.20	4.3	4.2	4.3	25,000
Piltel	.6900	.71	.69	.69	480,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	920.0	930	920	925	178,010
Ivantage Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	20,000
Philweb.com Inc.	.0825	.0825	.0725	.075	541,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. "A"	54.00	54	52.5	52.5	17,300
Manila Electric Co. "B"	58.00	59	58	59	210,700
Petron Corp.	1.88	1.88	1.78	1.82	7,082,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.00	1	1	1	253,000
Int'l Container Term'l SV	1.36	1.36	1.28	1.3	5,553,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	.5200	.58	.52	.58	270,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	.3000	.3	.3	.3	200,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	.1500	.15	.15	.15	330,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.88	17,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	.2200	.22	.22	.22	130,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	.5300	.53	.52	.53	1,100,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	.8100	.81	.8	.8	470,000
Union Cement Corp.	.7700	.82	.76	.81	1,860,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.30	2.3	2.3	2.3	30,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	278,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34.50	35	34	35	112,300
RFM Corp.	1.18	1.22	1.08	1.1	3,903,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	50.00	50	49.5	50	32,000
San Miguel Corp. "B"	62.50	63	62.5	63	363,500
Universal Robina Corp.	6.00	6	6	6	41,000
Vitarich Corp.	.5200	.52	.52	.52	70,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg "A"	.5500	.55	.55	.55	120,000
Ayala Corp.	8.30	8.3	8.1	8.1	3,929,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.60	1.6	1.56	1.56	340,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.25	1,700
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.08	87,000
A. Soriano Corp.	.3200	.32	.32	.32	1,070,000
APC Group Inc.	.2000	.205	.2	.2	3,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	.0050	.005	.005	.005	1,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.60	2.6	2.6	2.6	30,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	2.00	2	2	2	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.00	3.05	3	3.05	1,493,000
Crown Equities Inc.	.2700	.27	.26	.26	2,180,000
Southeast Asian Cement	.2500	.26	.25	.26	160,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	.5500	.56	.53	.53	5,280,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	1.80	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.20	1.22	1.18	1.18	1,043,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	23.50	23.5	23.25	23.25	62,200
Global Equities Inc.	.3500	.35	.35	.35	10,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	.2300	.23	.23	.23	40,000
Ionics Inc.	15.25	15.25	15	15.25	207,700
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.55	2.6	640,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.2	2.22	237,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. "B"	.0160	.016	.016	.016	300,000
Megaworld Corp.	.9500	.95	.92	.92	8,460,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	.3400	.34	.34	.34	840,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	.6500	.67	.65	.66	2,720,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	.4200	.42	.4	.41	2,990,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	.3400	.34	.33	.34	2,210,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
A Brown Company Inc.	.6800	.68	.67	.67	100,000
Cen Azucar De La Carlota	2.30	2.3	2.3	2.3	1,000
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	70,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	5,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.50	6.5	6.5	6.5	2,000
Music Corp.	3.20	3.2	3	3.1	793,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	.7000	.7	.64	.64	50,000
Picop Resources Inc.	.1500	.15	.145	.145	3,220,000
Pryce Corp.	.5100	.51	.51	.51	60,000
Philtread Tire & Rubber A	2.50	3	2.5	3	32,000
Philtread Tire & Rubber B	5.60	5.6	5.6	5.6	1,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	1.00	1	1	1	1,010,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.75	350,500
Steniel Manufacturing	.5900	.59	.58	.58	110,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	.6900	.69	.67	.67	2,220,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	.7000	.72	.65	.65	4,680,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	.6000	.6	.6	.6	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	48.00	48	48	48	71,300
Ayala Corp. Pref.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.14	289,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	535.0	535	535	535	400
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.40	3.4	3.4	3.4	3,000
Globe Tel. "A"-Warrants	530.0	530	530	530	100
Globe Telecom Hldg. (PDR)	750.0	750	750	750	2,000
Jollibee Warrants	11.75	11.75	11	11	55,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	.0036	.0036	.0036	.0036	123,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	1,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.20	7.2	7.2	7.2	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.70	6.7	6.5	6.6	13,234,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	.4100	.41	.4	.4	50,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	.4200	.43	.41	.41	1,340,000
C & P Homes Inc.	.3500	.35	.34	.35	2,910,000
Empire East Land Inc.	.4500	.45	.43	.44	17,910,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.55	2.6	2.5	2.55	5,524,000
Gotesco Land Inc. "B"	.0500	.05	.05	.05	500,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	.2000	.2	.2	.2	300,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	.4500	.45	.43	.43	550,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.10	2.12	2.1	2.1	375,000
SM Development Corp.	.9000	.9	.9	.9	30,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.00	7	6.9	7	4,415,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	.1350	.135	.115	.115	4,350,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	.0070	.007	.007	.007	5,000,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	.0070	.007	.007	.007	6,000,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	.0055	.0055	.0055	.0055	10,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4.00	4	4	4	22,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines "A"	.0180	.018	.018	.018	1,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines "B"	.0190	.019	.019	.019	500,000
Manila Mining Corp. "B"	.0065	.0065	.0065	.0065	28,000,000
Omico Corp.	.0046	.0046	.0046	.0046	85,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't. Corp.	.0200	.02	.019	.019	2,300,000
Philex Mining Corp. "B"	.2400	.24	.24	.24	200,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	.1900	.19	.19	.19	90,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	.0310	.031	.029	.029	8,400,000
Interport Res.	.0070	.007	.007	.007	15,000,000
Interport Res. "B"	.0080	.008	.008	.008	5,000,000
Pacifica	.0190	.019	.018	.018	16,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	.1050	.105	.105	.105	200,000

CURRENCIES

Feb. 2, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.064736	1.000000	49.1500
Japan	Yen	0.009212	0.008652	0.4252
United Kingdom	Pound	1.573786	1.478100	72.6486
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.136527	0.128226	6.3023
Switzerland	Franc	0.652651	0.612970	30.1275
Canada	Dollar	0.712961	0.669613	32.9115
Singapore	Dollar	0.612974	0.575705	28.2959
Australia	Dollar	0.590930	0.555001	27.2783
Bahrain	Dinar	2.824384	2.652661	130.3783
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.283937	0.266674	13.1070
Brunei	Dollar	0.609116	0.572082	28.1178
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000105	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.025201	0.023669	1.1633
UAE	Dirham	0.289898	0.272272	13.3822
Korea	Won	0.000848	0.000796	0.0391
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.939200	46.1617
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.480205	23.6021
France	Franc	0.152450	0.143180	7.0373
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.426190	20.9472
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.068254	3.3547
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.023282	1.1443
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000485	0.0238
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.157962	7.7638
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004685	0.2303
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005645	0.2775
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.023282	1.1443
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.192538	58.6132

Memo to Finance Secretary Romulo

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

YOU have the most daunting job in the Cabinet, haven't you? Managing a mind-boggling P200-billion budget deficit should scare the daylights out of any man. You need all the help you can get.

How do we get out of this hole? All your available options are ugly. A new round of tax increases seems out of the question at this time. President Ramos used his six-year term to raise the entire range of taxes in the internal revenue code, winding up that activity with the comprehensive tax reform law of 1997. In the process, taxes on fire insurance premiums, for example, rose to a total of 24.5 percent, the highest rate in the whole wide world, and close to the amusement tax rate.

Another option is to go after the big tax evaders. But they hire the services of the smartest lawyers in the country and the cases can get mired in the tax court for ages.

Improving tax collection efficiency won't be easy. You will be waging war against graft and corruption in the two most notorious of all government agencies—Bureaus of Internal Revenue and Customs. Edgardo Espiritu found out how tough this war was.

Selling government assets is all right, but what prices can you fetch at a fire sale? Then, what do you do next year? You can't keep on selling the family jewels.

Privatizing government corporations has been going on for some time but success has been spotty at best. You will face the same old dilemma. If the corporation is a money loser, who is going to buy it even at a cut-rate price? If it makes money, why should it be sold?

Cutting government expenses, by as much as P60 billion, seems promising. There must be a lot of fat in the general appropriations act. For example, it is estimated that graft and corruption siphon off 40 percent of funds for public works projects.

Don't forget small pockets of savings. As a former boss of mine would say, "Take care of the centavos and the peso will take care of itself." You may recall that when you were in the Senate, Congress put up a self-insurance fund for the buildings of the national government. An initial appropriation of P500 million was handed over to the GSIS to manage. I do not know if the funds built up with additional appropriations in the subsequent years. Maybe the fund should be wound down and the money given back to the national government. You may want to commission a risk management study to review the feasibility of the self-insurance fund idea. I can get you in touch with the best risk management experts in the country.

You can save government agencies and instrumentalities a lot of money if you can negotiate to bring down the premium rates that GSIS charges for fire insurance on government buildings. The Association of Insurance Brokers can help you here.

GSIS has an absolute monopoly on government non-life insurance business. As a result, GSIS soaks its clients with premiums enormously higher than those available in the open market. I know a case where the premium charged by GSIS, which pays no commissions to intermediaries, was about 10 times the level a private insurance company would have charged at full market commissions. And the poor government agency, by law, is stuck with GSIS.

But isn't this taking government money from one pocket and putting it in another? Not so, because more than half of the premiums ends up with reinsurers, local and foreign.

Finally, you may want to find out the last time GSIS remitted profits to the Office of the President. I recall that when Sonny Belmonte was general manager, P300 million in profits were sent to Malacañang.

Considering the huge size of the deficit, cutting GSIS premiums may not be much. But it is painless and will not result in a loss of jobs. Besides, every little bit of savings will help. And it will be a good start. Don't you agree?

(Questions of Policies can be reached through 06hydragen@vasia.com)

DOTC pushing for ₱5.77-B rural phone plan

By Anthony O. Alcantara

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications will push for the implementation of the P5.77-billion Alternative Communications Program that will provide basic telecommunications services in rural areas.

Newly named Transport and Communications Secretary Pantaleon D. Alvarez said he would direct the undersecretary of communications and the DOTC's technical staff to draft an executive order that will expedite the implementation of the project.

He said meeting the telecommunications requirements in the countryside is high in the agenda of President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

"I think the program was very well-thought and should be pursued the soonest possible time," he said.

"As you know, the ACP intends to provide the Filipino people access to telecommunications and information services. It aims to bring them to the mainstream of social, political and economic life on matters of national and international interest."

He added that since the ACP will be undertaken by the private sector, there will be minimal or no cost at all to the government.

Under the ACP proposal, a tele-center in a municipality with an Internet-ready multimedia personal computer will be hooked to the existing public calling office, a very small aperture terminal (VSAT) station or a landline facility.

There will also be a scanner, a printer, an uninterrupted power supply with automatic voltage regulator, and certain interface devices to connect the PC to the existing PCO terminal equipment or telephone line.

A prepaid card-type payphone will be installed in all the barangays connected to the tele-center in the municipality.

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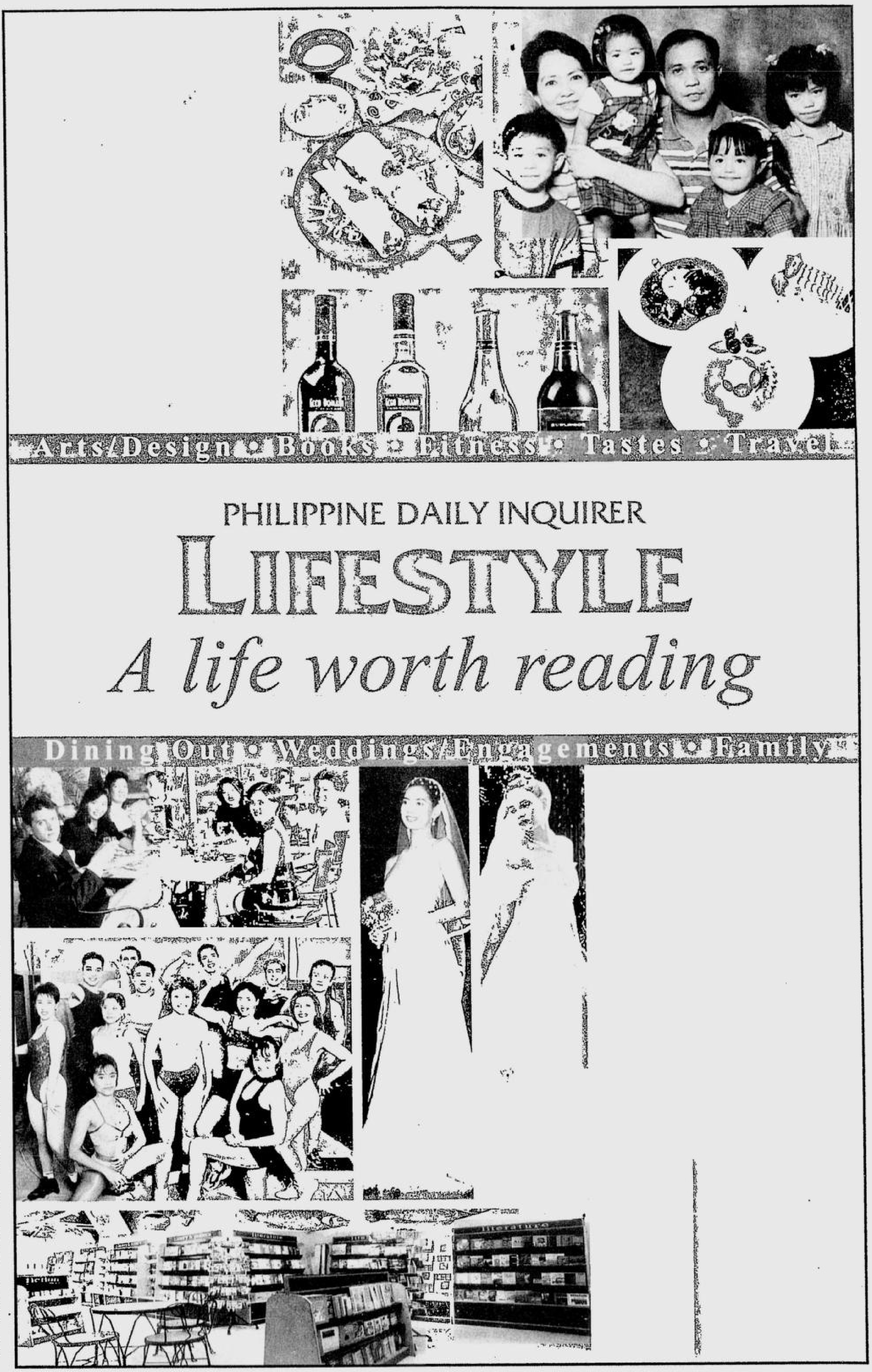

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REZ GOPEZ-SINDAC, Editor

Aetna HealthCare introduces premium HMO programs

AETNA HealthCare Inc., one of the largest health maintenance organizations (HMO) in the country, recently unveiled the Aetna Health Access Advantage Plan (catering to individuals and families) and the Aetna Med-A-Sure Advantage Plan (for small and medium enterprises with 5 to 49 employees and dependents). Both health care programs offer superior and unparalleled benefits and services to its members. These services are provided through Aetna's nationwide network of accredited medical professionals, clinics and hospitals including Makati Medical Center, St. Luke's Medical Center and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital.

The Aetna Health Access Advantage and Med-A-Sure Advantage Plans are available in expanded Room & Board and Annual Benefit Limit combinations which determine the peso equivalent of a member's program benefits. With a wide range of options, members may select benefits to suit his specific health care requirements. Additionally, members will also enjoy coverage for dental services and a standard annual physical exam as a complement to their enhanced outpatient and inpatient health care benefits.

Aetna Health Access and Med-A-Sure are also available in Classic and Select plans. You may contact your Aetna HealthCare representative for more details on these programs.

Aetna HealthCare Inc. is a member of the ING Group, an integrated financial services provider with over 50 million customers in more than 65 countries worldwide. ING is engaged in health and life insurance, banking and asset management, and has been named by Fortune magazine as the No. 1 health and life stock insurance company in terms of profits.

To avail of Aetna Health Access and Med-A-Süre Advantage Plans, call 750-9000 or 1-800-1-888-9900.

REGIONAL MEETING

Representatives of the member insurance companies of the Aetna-Generali Global Benefits Network in the South-East Asian region attended a regional meeting last November at the Training Center of Generali Pilipinas, Salustiana D. Ty Tower, Makati City. Seated (from left): Alfonso P. Garcia Jr., president and CEO of Generali Pilipinas Life Assurance Company; Dr. Elio Moccia, CEO of the Generali Employee Benefits Network, based in Brussels; Sergio Di Caprio, chair of the Generali Pilipinas and CEO for Asia of Assicurazioni Generali, based in Hong Kong and Marco Giacomelli, Generali Pilipinas VP for Bancassurance. Standing at far right is Jose R. Millan, VP for corporate marketing of Generali Pilipinas Life Assurance Company.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERS

Compaq Computer Philippines, Inc. reaffirms its commitment to their Presario partners by initiating the official lighting of signage recently held at the Accent Micro branch in SM Megamall. The lighted signage signifies that Accent Micro is an authorized distributor of the Presario line of PCs. Shown with the Accent Micro staff are (from left) Cheryl Ng, product specialist, Lamco International; Grace Obeya, retail marketing and administrative manager, Accent Micro Products, Inc.; Bertrand Ng, general manager, Accent Micro Products, Inc.; Vicky Agorilla Compaq's consumer sales manager; Anna Andres, business unit development manager, Lamco International; and Richard Lim, VP – retails operations, Accents Micro Products.

PPM elects new chair, secretary

THE PEOPLE'S Patriotic Movement (PPM) recently announced the election of Emmanuel Q. Yap as its chair and former labor undersecretary Amado Gat Inciong as its secretary-general.

A citizen's movement, the PPM aims to build a strong nation based on the following five pillars: a strong industrialized national economy; a strong, just and democratic government; a strong commitment to principles and practices of universally accepted human values, social justice and sustainable development; a strong armed force for national security; and strong commitment to the principles of cooperation and reciprocity, respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression and non-interference in national affairs and peaceful coexistence in the relationship between and among nations.

Yap headed the Congressional Economic Planning Office which prepared a master plan for national economic development in 1968 while Inciong chaired the committee which drafted the Labor Code of the Philippines in 1972-1974.

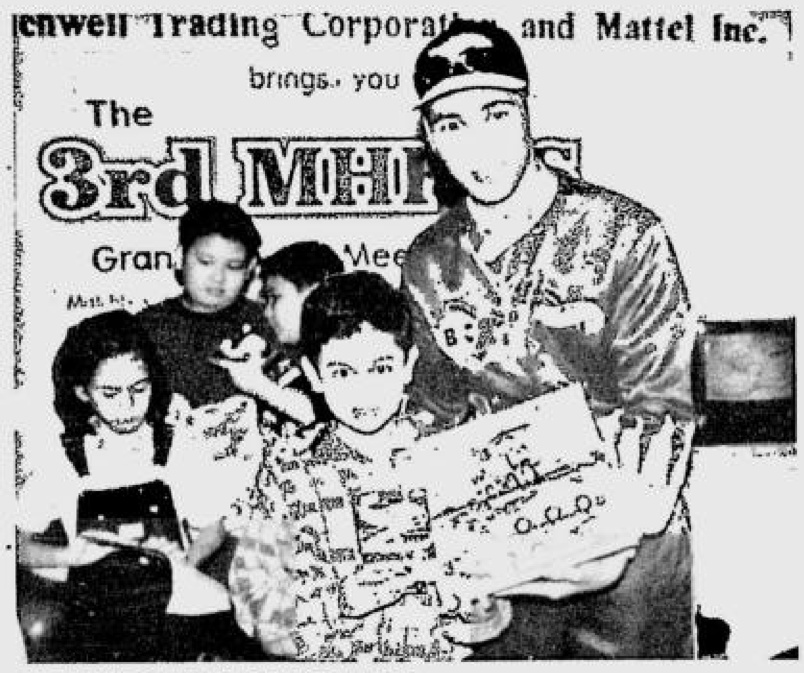
SMART
CONTRACT SIGNING
SMART
and
WIDE COMMUNICATIONS,
January 5, 2001

OPEN INTERCONNECTION

Cellular leader Smart Communications and Worldwide Communications have recently entered into an interconnection agreement, the first between a cellular mobile telephone system (CMTS) and a trunk radio network (TRN). This agreement now enables subscribers of Smart to make outgoing and receive incoming calls from a Worldwide subscriber on his Smart celfone and vice versa. Shown during the contract signing ceremony are (from left) lawyer Rogelio V. Quevedo, Smart's legal department head and Cristopher P. Concepcion, Worldwide Communications' president

HARD ROCK CAFÉ'S PARTY

C Interactive recently joined the celebration of Hard Rock Café's 5th anniversary, which had Freestyle as special guest. Enjoying the party are (from left) 103.5 K Lite's Joe South, Pat Perado, Jess The Blade, Freestyle's Jinky and a friend, and C Interactive's Fatima D. Garcia.



GRAND SWAP MEET PARTY

Richwell Trading Corporation and Mattel Inc. in cooperation with Strike Zone, Hanford Boys 'R Us, Carmona Circuit Phils., Airheads Flavored Candies, Universal Robina Corporation, Jack & Jill Roller Coaster, Knotts's Berry Farm, Cloud 9, Club Panoly, Baby Magazine, Chips Delight, Kameraworld, dwRock 96.3 and T.G.I. Friday's gathered once again for the 3rd MHPCS Grand Swap Meet Party a the Half Time of Strike Zone on Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Hotwheels Man Eric Mogan (right) hosted the event, who is shown here with Joseph Cole Jr., storytelling contest winner. The contest allowed participants to share with their experiences with their toy collection. Those interested to sign up as a member of MHPCS, can call Richwell Marketing Department at 740-4673.

CBA SIGNING

Collective Bargaining Agreement between Schering-Plough Labor Union and Schering-Plough Corporation was signed last November at the Magellan's Galley, San Miguel Properties Center. Sealing the agreement with a handshake are (from left) Epitacio Titong Jr., president and general manager of Schering-Plough Corporation and Salvador Soriano Jr., executive vice president of Schering-Plough Labor Union. Witnessing the event are members of the management panel.

BITS & Clips

Moldex awards year 2000 top performers

On Feb. 15, Moldex Realty Marketing, Inc. will award its top performers through a tribute titled "Survivor Series." The awarding ceremonies will be held at the Fishing Village Restaurant at 1 p.m. and will be attended by new and existing members of the special sales network and the brokers' network as well as Moldex executives led by MRMI president Editha L. Manansala. Moldex continues to put premium to its network of salespeople by providing competitive incentives and benefits packages. For details, call 832-7777 and look for Jolyn or Nel.

Fedders now at reduced prices

AT times when all prices are nowhere to go but up, what people need is real value for their money. This is why Alen International Industries Corporation, distributor of Fedders Room Air Conditioner, offers a special price reduction promo for all its brand new aircon units. Avail of the following price discounts: ¾ hp, before – 12,709 now – 10,790; 1.0 hp, before – 14,590 now – 12,590; 1.5 hp, before – 16,690 now – 14,190; 2.0 hp, before – 21,490 now – 18,490. So rush now to any Fedders dealer nearest you. Promo is until Feb. 28, 2001 only.

Get your free calendar at Burgoo

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant, located at 310 Tomas Morato Avenue welcomes the new year by continuing to provide its customers with sumptuous and quality dishes. As a treat, guests will take home a lovely desk calendar from Burgoo. The calendar showcases some of the Burgoo's mouth-watering dishes to remind you of visiting the restaurant again when you feel like dining. Also, watch out for the opening of its second outlet at Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City this first quarter of the year.

Big firms to join e-commerce expo

BIG companies will join the Philippine International Business Forum and Technology Exhibition on Internet Commerce dubbed "E-Commerce Expo 2001" which will be held on Feb. 22-25 at the Megatrade Hall, SM Megamall, EDSA, Mandaluyong City. The event is expected to serve as an excellent promotional platform for participants to address the inquiries and priorities of the would-be as well as existing e-commerce industry practitioners, launch new technologies, introduce business opportunities, expand market horizons, keep abreast with competition and enhance corporate image and brand recall of the needed systems, services, equipment, and solutions. For inquiries, call EXPOCOMM at 897-9494/0917-9293732 or email expocomm@eqis.net

BIOTA annual confab at UST

THE UNIVERSITY of Sto. Tomas will host the 36th BIOTA National Annual Convention on April5-7 2001. An association of biology teachers in the Philippines, the convention will feature scientific activities including posters, lectures and workshops. Biology faculty interested in participating in the scientific sessions by submitting posters, papers for lectures or workshops are invited to contact Rosie S. Madulid (for lectures and workshop papers) and Edward Quinto (for posters) at Department of Biological Sciences College of Science, Univesity of Sto. Tomas, España, Sampaloc, Manila or call 731-3101 loc. 8297.

Alternative solution to hair loss

UNEMONDIALE Management and Dev't. Co. introduces an inexpensive way to solve hair loss. Called NSG (non surgical grafts), this method is widely used by many hair replacement companies. It is your best alternative to surgical methods and is completely reversible. Unemondiale, a professional consultant firm will help you attain a hairstyle that will meet the demands of your lifestyle and give you more confidence. For consultation, call 897-1318 or 890-0880.

SUGARLAND
BEVERAGE CO

TOP SALESPEOPLE CITED

Sugarland Beverage Corp., the country's leading powdered drinks maker, recently honored its best performing sales people who contributed significantly to the company's record success last year. The awardees include Berly Carbonera, Sales Rep of the Year (3rd from left); Jenny Carmento, Most Improved Sales Rep of the Year (5th from left) and Lucy Nolasco, Sales Supervisor of the Year (4th from left). The Sales Rep of the Year for Mindanao, Luzon and Visayas were also cited by SBC. LTDI transition manager Pachot Castaneda (1st from left), SBC's Vince Concio and Armando Bautista led the awarding ceremonies held recently at the SBC Training Center in Quiapo, Manila.

KENNY ROGERS ROASTERS-DINERS CLUB TIE-UP

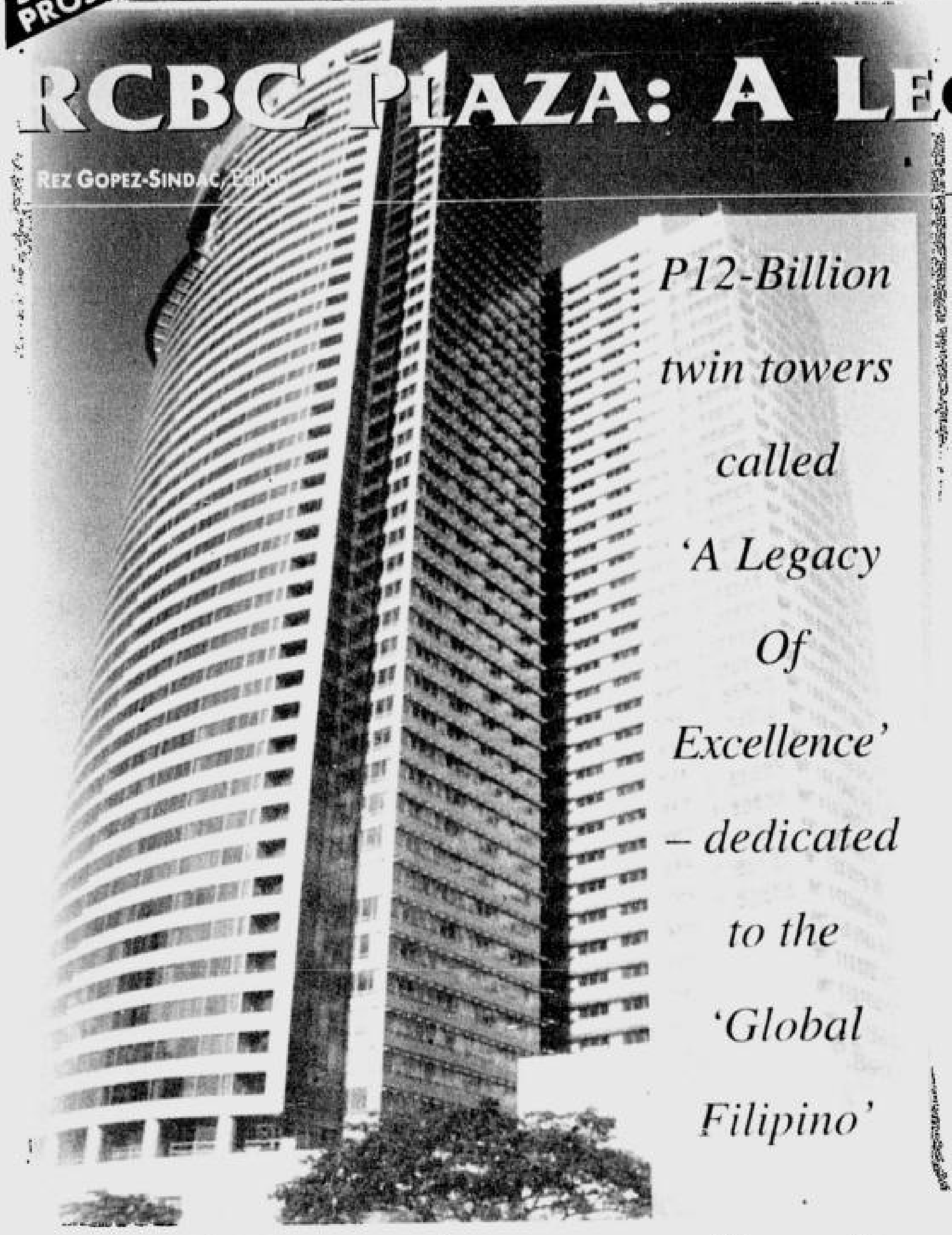
Kenny Rogers Roasters is now accepting credit cards in all Kenny Rogers outlets, making their sumptuous food more accessible to a wider market. Present at the contract signing are (from left) Roasters Phils. Inc. marketing manager Vic Gregorio; Meggie Jose, local store marketing manager; Joel Songco, finance manager and representatives of Diners Club International: Coz Castro, regional service manager; Alex Ilagan, EVP-general manager and Benjie Grajo, merchant sales division manager.

'EXPLORER OF THE SEAS' LAUNCH

Royal Caribbean International (RCI), the world's leading cruise ship operator, recently launched its newest vessel, "Explorer of the Seas." With a displacement of 142,000 tons and a length of 1,020 feet, Explorer is the largest commercial ship in the world. Attending the Explorer's maiden voyage are (from left) Rama Rebbapragada, RCI sales and marketing director for Asia-Pacific; Joy Abrogar, chief operating officer of Arpan Air, RCI's Philippine agency; and Alejandro Duran, RCI International sales representative.

RCBC PLAZA: A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

REZ GOPEZ-SINDAC, Editor
SPROJECTS@INQUIRER.COM.PH
GRACE PENALES, Account Manager



P12-Billion twin towers called 'A Legacy Of Excellence' – dedicated to the 'Global Filipino'

President Arroyo leads guests at RCBC Plaza inauguration today

PRESIDENT Arroyo

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal Arroyo will be guest of honor and main speaker today during the inauguration of the RCBC Plaza, the new corporate headquarters of the Yuchengco Group of Companies, in Makati City.

The chief executive heads a list of dignitaries to be welcomed by Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco, chair of the Yuchengco Group.

Some 1,000 guests from the government, diplomatic corps and the business community – both local and foreign – are expected to attend the inaugural.

His Eminence, Jaime Cardinal Sin, will deliver the invocation in a brief ceremony that will be highlighted by the president's speech and unveiling of a memorial entitled "The Spirit of Edsa," a bronze masterpiece by renowned sculptor Ed Castrillo.

The P12 billion RCBC Plaza – hailed as the finest and most prestigious business address in the Philippines – consists of two towers, a three-level podium and seven levels of basement parking with a total area of 250,000 square meters.

Besides office space, it will house a cultural museum, a 450-seat auditorium, a chapel that can seat 150 people, banking chambers in both towers, a VIP lounge, a gym and health spa, and an open courtyard. Its technology is state-of-the-art and is at par with the world's best, featuring an invisible security system, the latest fire-protection system, fiber-optic telecommunications system, a Chiller-type airconditioning system and digitally-controlled and building automation system (BAS).

Information Technology Zone

RCBC Plaza was recently designated by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) as an Information Technology Zone. It has also been declared a Special Economic Zone. This means that qualified RCBC Plaza locators and tenants will be given a package of tax incentives designed to attract foreign investments in the areas of computer-and knowledge-based operations such as IT solutions providers, shared services, software development and engineering design, among others.

RCBC will occupy 15 floors of the 46-level Yuchengco Tower. Other flagships of the Yuchengco Group of Companies – Malayan Insurance Company, biggest non-life insurance group in the Philippines, Great Pacific Life Assurance Corporation, one of the 10 largest insurance companies in the country, and House of Investments (a highly diversified investment company which count among its major affiliates EEI, Manila Memorial Park, and Mapua Institute of Technology – will also be housed in the Yuchengco Tower.

A fifth flagship – the AY Foundation, which is the social development arm of the Yuchengco Group – will also operate from the RCBC Plaza.

The RCBC Plaza, through its developer RCBC Realty, is a joint-venture project of RCBC Land and the GIC Real Estate. RCBC Land, which is owned by RCBC and Pan Malayan Management and Investment Corporation, provided the 1.04 hectare "island" site of the corners of Ayala Avenue and Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, which GIC Realty contributed money and its real-estate experience into the project. Colliers Jardine Philippines is the exclusive property managers of the RCBC Plaza.

Early Tenants

Early Tenants of the RCBC Plaza are Nippon Express Philippines and the HKT Network Services Inc.

HKT will also serve as RCBC Plaza's exclusive technology partner offering its premium i.Tower Services to all RCBC tenants.

The i.Tower Services will provide instant Internet Access Services, Virtual Local Area Network (LAN) and Virtual Server Services.

In June, the De La Salle University Graduate School of Business will locate its Makati campus at the RCBC Plaza, concentrating on IT and e-business. The school will offer state-of-the-art facilities and audio visual equipment that will also be used for training classes, business meetings and other similar events for MBA students.

Benchmark of building excellence

RCBC Plaza is hailed as the new standard of excellence in design and construction. Both towers reflect superior quality, efficiency and state-of-the-art technology. Their unique features include a large floor plate with column-free office layout, provision for raised flooring, a high efficiency ratio usable area per floor, glass aluminum curtain wall design which permits natural light to all parts of the floor, and an unobstructed 360 degree view on all sides of both towers.

The buildings are provided with a 100 percent emergency back-up power, high-tech invisible security system, the latest fire protection system, vertical transport system designed for minimum waiting time, individually Chiller-type airconditioning system, fiber backbone and a computerized building management system (BMS) that will monitor and control the Plaza and ensure operational efficiency of all facilities:

World class

From the very start, RCBC Plaza was envisioned to be "world class." Thus, the world's best names in design and construction were tapped to complement the experience and creativity of the country's best teams.

The leading architectural firm of W.V. Coscolluela and Associates and New York based Skidmore, Owings and Merill were assembled to maximize the potential of the 1.04 hectare lot and ensure a landmark architectural with a highly efficient and responsive work environment.

Top construction companies in the world were invited to join the bidding process. The project was awarded to a 3-member consortium, Walter Bau AG of Germany, Concrete Construction Limited of Australia and the local partner, EEI Corporation.

Walter Bau is a huge international company that has been in the general construction business all over the world for 115 years. Concrete Construction is an Australian based company which has been a specialist in high-rise development since 1916. Completing the consortium is EEI Corporation, the first Philippine construction company to have gained quality certification from two international bodies, the ISO 9002 accreditation body of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, one of the largest construction company in the country.

Bovis Lend Lease and Pacific Orient Consultants and Management Co., Inc. are the project managers and construction managers respectively and Colliers Jardine Philippines is the exclusive marketing manager for both local and international sales.

Features and Amenities

The Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium
Location : Northeastern corner on
the 4th Podium level
Capacity : 450 persons

The Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium is named after Gen. Carlos P. Romulo who is considered the first Global Filipino. Gen. Romulo was the first Filipino and the first Asian to become president of the United Nations General Assembly in 1949. Twice he also served as president of the UN Security Council. The multi-purpose venue offers a state-of-the-art facility to serve as a conventional auditorium for corporate activities. It will also host special performing groups like Repertory Philippines. It is expected to enhance the cultural environment in Makati City.

Function

A multi-purpose facility that can accommodate broadway-style musicals, ballet, opera, drama, dance, etc. while catering to business functions for different conventions, lectures and presentations.

President/ B10

Congratulations
to the Management and Staff of the

Yuchengco Group of Companies

on the inauguration of the

RCBC
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for the new millennium
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President Arroyo leads guests at RCBC Plaza. . .

(From page B9)

The Yuchengco Museum

Location: Southeast corner of the Podium

The museum will operate as a cultural-business entity, exhibiting exquisite cultural material designed to encourage opportunities for those inclined towards art and culture pursuits.

Features

- A permanent exhibition entitled "This is Manila." This display will introduce visitors to the dynamic history and culture of Manila and will feature a state-of-the-art audio visual presentation.
- A permanent exhibition entitled "Treasures of the Philippines." Utilizing exquisite items on loan from the National Museum, this gallery will highlights themes which have dominated the lives of those who have lived in the Philippine archipelago from pre-historic times to the present.
- A temporary Exhibition Gallery featuring the very best from the international exhibitions circuit.

Library

The Plaza provides a well-designed library with a large collection of books, computers and reference materials for gathering data and information.

Chapel

A soothing place of worship to calm the mind, heart and soul. Seating 150 people, the chapel offers RCBC Plaza's occupants a place to commune with God amidst "busyness" of life.

Gym - health spa

RCBC has designed its Plaza to cater to the needs of its occupants so that they never have to leave the premises for their off-office rejuvenation and relaxation. The gym is fully equipped with the right equipment to keep one physically fit and active. And for the ultimate in toning and recharging tired bones, there's the health spa where one can immerse himself in liquid tranquility.

Food court - fine dining

RCBC Plaza offers numerous food places. One can choose from a wide variety of fast food offerings or fine dining restaurants.

VIP lounge

Executives can gather for a drink or informal business meetings in the attractive and upscale lounge where light snacks and drinks can be served. The perfect complement to business operations.

Open air courtyard

What better way to inspire productivity and calm frayed nerves than to take a relaxing stroll throughout the courtyard? The well-trimmed garden and soothing waters are guaranteed to refresh both mind and the body alike.

RCBC Plaza Vital Statistics

Security features - Invisible computerized system / latest fire protection; Telecommunication system - Fiber optics / dedicated bandwidth; Depth of Excavation for foundation - 30 meters; How much soil was excavated - 258,000 cubic meters of soil, enough to reclaim 5 hectares of land; How many trucks hauled out soil - 26,000 trucks; Quality of foundation - Floating foundation to withstand earthquakes and strong winds; How much steel used - 90,000 tons of steel; How much concrete used - 142,000 cubic meters of high strength concrete; How much aluminum and glass - 31,600 sq/m of aluminum and glass curtain wall

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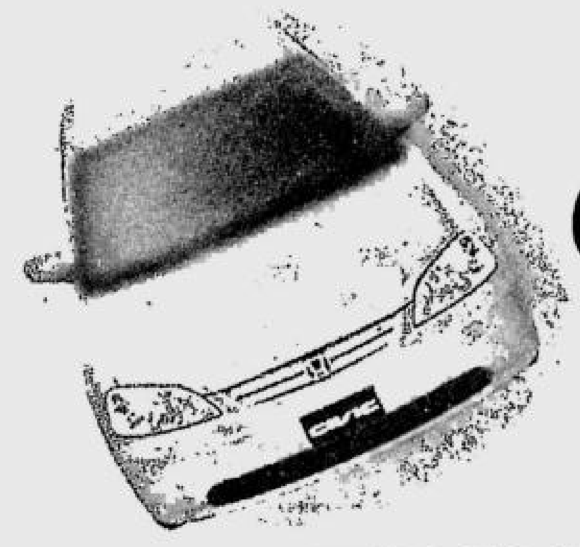

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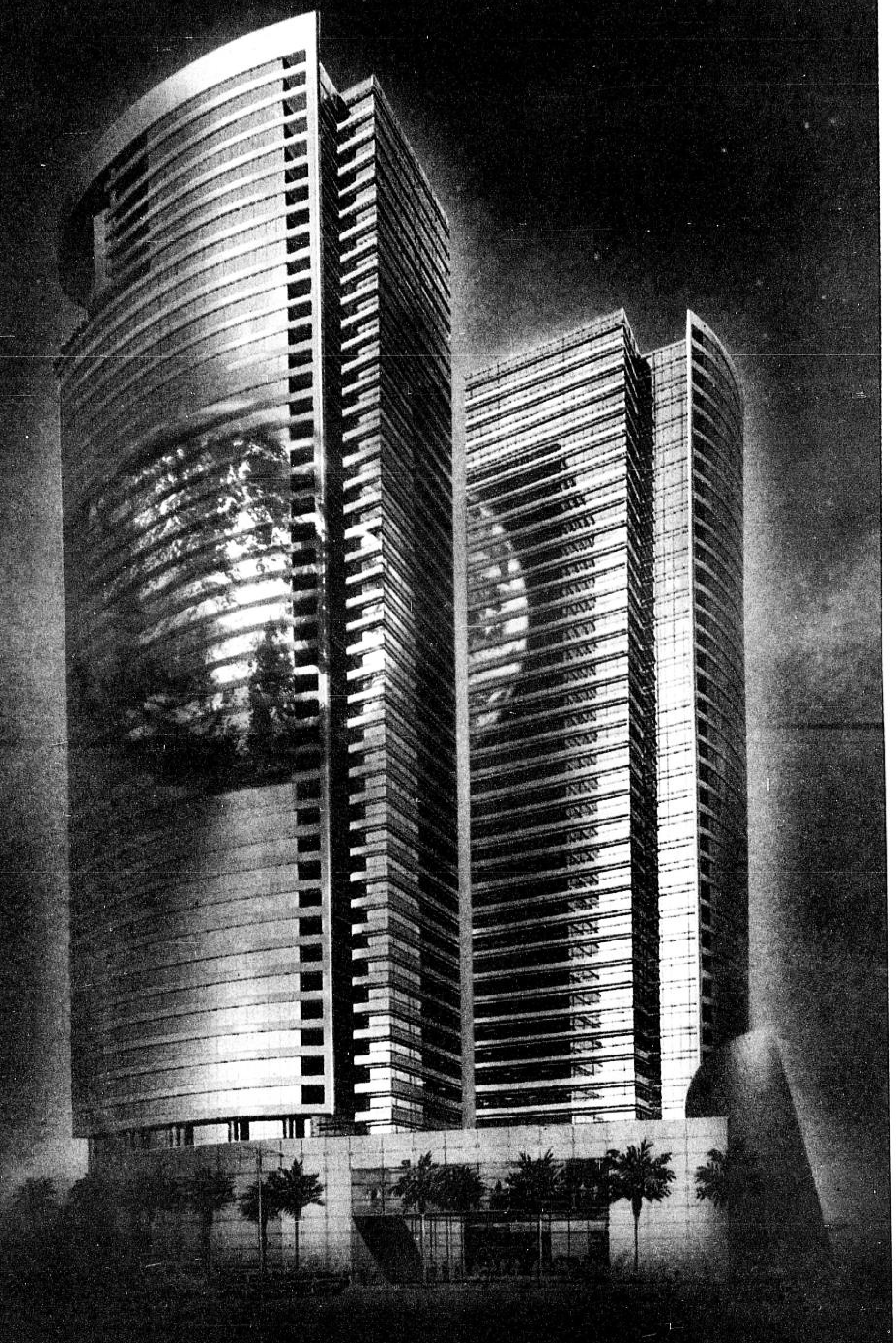
"Before you even show me your designs, remember I have only one standard. Absolutely no other building should come close."

Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco



Nothing comes close. . .

At the gateway to the Makati Central Business District stands a premier business address unlike any other. Designed to provide office comforts and state-of-the-art facilities that make conducting business a sheer pleasure.

The RCBC Plaza.

Situated on a prime lot bounded by major thoroughfares, the island site is a self-contained environment that allows you to engage in a multitude of activities.

Take advantage of cutting edge IT infrastructure and services in the first PEZA approved IT vertical development in the Makati Central Business District. RCBC Plaza, offering the premium *I.Tower* services, is the first world-class intelligent building in the Philippines empowered by HKT Network Services (Phils.), Inc.

Satisfy your appetite at any of the numerous restaurants. Take a relaxing stroll through the courtyard. Or visit the museum or the auditorium perhaps, for a healthy dose of history and art. You could also spend some time at the health spa recharging your body. Then visit the chapel and do the same for your spirit. It's all possible -- and you need not even leave the premises.

Truly, the RCBC Plaza is a destination where business converges with culture and today's urban lifestyle. Absolutely no other business address comes close.

RCBC
PLAZA

A joint venture between
RCBC Land and
Reco Rizal Pine Private Ltd.

Exclusive Marketing and Management Agents COLLIERS JARDINE

For inquiries, please call 8125218, 8108537(Fax) or visit www.rcbcplaza.ph.

MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

WELCOME to the inauguration of our new home.

RCBC Plaza – the twin towers we inaugurate today – is the Yuchengco Group of Companies' statement of faith in the Philippines and the Filipino people.

The faith is as strong, as solid and as enduring as the steel-and-concrete foundation on which the RCBC Plaza stands.

Dedicated to the Global Filipino, RCBC Plaza explores the horizons of a world that is increasingly becoming borderless. It demonstrates the Yuchengco Group's entry into the Digital Age. It symbolizes our Group's ready acceptance of the economic and technological changes now sweeping the globe.

An architectural landmark in the country's premier business area, RCBC Plaza exudes the vigor, powerful and people-oriented thrust of the Yuchengco Group as a dynamic institution that meets the challenge of the new century. It reflects the social commitment that is the core of our business philosophy: discipline, hard work, integrity, service excellence. It is an articulation of our belief that the Group's foremost responsibility is to serve the larger interests of the Filipino people.

Toward this end, I am happy to say that RCBC Plaza, equipped as it is with state-of-the-art facilities, addresses the need of the business and financial community to have a "home" that not only provides the most modern amenities but also assures the safety, comfort and elegance of the offices that will locate in its premises.

On this occasion, I wish to thank the men and women who have made the Yuchengco Group it is today. The RCBC Plaza is a fitting salute to their labors and the excellence of service, they have rendered over the past seven decades. I also wish to express our thanks to our customers, clients, associates and friends who have kept faith with us through the years.

Finally, I would like to convey our deepest appreciation to two overseas partners in this endeavor – GIC Real Estate, our esteemed partner in constructing the RCBC Plaza, and the Sanwa Bank of Japan, a long-time associate of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation.

We are all encouraged by their active participation in this project. Even before ground was broken, I was asked what the inspiration was behind this venture.

I replied:

"Success is not achieved by a lone visionary working in a vacuum. It is achieved by a community of dedicated, talented people striving for a common purpose competing with themselves and others to deliver their very best years after year. Keeping these achievers continually motivated may be one of the most challenging tasks facing business leaders today.

"Providing the optimal work environment for achievers is one of the best ways I know to keep them properly motivated. Sometimes, this means working with the government to improve the business climate. That is why I want our corporate headquarters to speak not only of our achievement but more importantly, our continued commitment to global competitiveness. We must have the best location, the best address. I want our corporate headquarters to be the safest and most intelligent building not only in the Makati business center but in the entire Philippines. And I want us to share it with other businesses who mirror our achievements.

"Before you even show me your designs, I have only one standard: Absolutely no other building should come close."

Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco

IT ZONE STATUS FOR RCBC PLAZA

The RCBC Plaza, the most modern office development in the country today, was given IT Zone status recently by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority. Shown with Atty. Lilia de Lima, PEZA director general (second from left), (from left) Perry Uy, RCBC Realty Corp. president; Lawrence Yeung, regional IP business head of Pacific Century CyberWorks (Hong Kong), one of the locators at the RCBC Plaza and Cesar E.A. Virata, RCBC Realty Corp. chair.

THE STRENGTHS OF MANY,
THE POWER OF ONE.

YGC
YUCHENGCO GROUP OF COMPANIES

TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE
FOR YOU.

When people of different backgrounds and skills work together, they create a power greater than the sum of their individual abilities.

This is the strength of synergy.
And this is the strength of YGC. The Yuchengco Group of Companies.

YGC is all of Malayan Insurance, RCBC, Grepalife, Pacific Plans, House of Investments, RCBC Bankard, AY Foundation and 26 other companies. Working as one to better serve our customers. Harnessing 75 years of experience and expertise in a wide range of industries: from insurance to infrastructure, education to information technology, banking to business partnerships with major local and international companies – with a solitary vision to help build our nation's future, and help fulfill our people's dreams.

It's time you found out how our synergy can work for you.

YGC salutes its member companies as they reach the following milestones in the year 2000:

Mapua Institute of Technology
75 years

Malayan Insurance
70 years

RCBC
40 years

AY Foundation
30 years

YGC

AY Foundation, Inc. · EEI Corporation · First Malayan Leasing and Finance Corp. · The First Nationwide Assurance Corp. · Great Pacific Life Assurance Corp. · Honda Cars Kalookan, Inc. · Honda Cars Manila, Inc. · Honda Cars Quezon City, Inc. · House of Investments, Inc. · iPeople, Inc. · Isuzu Manila, Inc. · Malayan Insurance Company, Inc. · Malayan International Insurance Corp., Ltd. · Malayan Reinsurance Corp. · Mapua Institute of Technology · Pacific Plans, Inc. · Pan Malayan Management and Investment Corp. · Pan Malayan Travel and Tours, Inc. · Pan Pacific Computer Center, Inc. · Philrock, Inc. · RCBC Bankard, Inc. · RCBC California International · RCBC Capital · RCBC International Finance Ltd. · RCBC Savings Bank · RCBC Securities, Inc. · Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation · YGC Corporate Services, Inc. · Affiliates: HI Eisai Pharmaceutical, Inc. · Thp.HI Daiei Trading Co., Inc. · Manila Memorial Park Cemetery, Inc. · Nippon Life Insurance Co. of the Philippines, Inc. · Tokio Marine Malayan Insurance Co., Inc.

Flagships of the Yuchengco Group of Companies

The Pan Malayan Management and Investment Corporation (PMMIC) is the holding company of the Yuchengco Group of Companies, which includes:

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.

Amb. Alfonso T. Yuchengco
Chairman of the Board

Alfonso S. Yuchengco III
Executive Vice Chair & CEO

Cesar E.A. Virata
Corporate Vice President

Valentin A. Araneta
President & COO

Subsidiaries: RCBC Capital Corporation (subsidiaries: RCBC Securities, Inc., RCBC Bankard), RCBC Savings Bank, RCBC Land, Inc. (subsidiary: RCBC Realty Corp.), RCBC International Finance, Ltd., RCBC California International, Inc., RCBC Telemoney Europe, RCBC Forex Brokers Corporation.

Major Affiliates: YGC Corporate Services, Subic Power Corp., Nippon Life Insurance Company of the Philippines, Honda Cars Philippines, Inc., Isuzu Philippines Corp., Luisita Industrial Park Corp., Sigma Cee Mining and Securities Clearing Corporation.

Malayan Group of Insurance Companies

Yvonne S. Yuchengco
President & COO

Member Companies: Malayan Insurance Company, Inc., Tokio Marine Malayan Insurance Co. Inc., First Nationwide Assurance Corp., Malayan Reinsurance Corporation, Malayan Zurich Insurance Company, Inc. and MICO Equities, Inc.

Foreign subsidiaries: Malayan International Insurance Corp., Ltd., Malayan Insurance Co. (Hong Kong) Ldt., Malayan Insurance Company (UK) Ltd.

Great Pacific Life Assurance

Alfredo C. Antonio
President & COO

Subsidiaries: Pacific Plans, Inc. and Pan Pacific Computer Center, Inc.

Affiliates: Grepaland, Inc. and Nippon Life Insurance Co., of the Philippines, Inc. (NLI-Phils.)

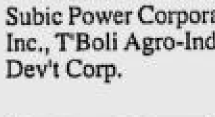
House of Investments

Rizalino S. Navarro
Chairman & COO

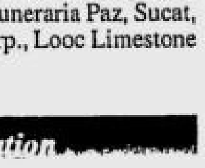
Subsidiaries: EEI Corporation, i People, Inc. (Mapua Institute of Technology), First Malayan Leasing and Finance Corp., HI-Eisai Pharmaceutical, Inc., HI-Daiei Trading Corp., Landev Corporation, Zamboanga Wood Products, Inc., Satellite Prop. Estate Corp., HI-Realty Corp., House of Investments (Cayman Islands), Ltd., Investment Managers, Inc., HI-Daiwa House (Phils.), Z-Fishing Corp., Zamboanga Gold Mining Corp.

Affiliates: Manila Memorial Park Cemetery Inc., Subic Power Corporation, La Funeraria Paz, Sucat, Inc., T'Boli Agro-Industrial Corp., Looc Limestone Dev't Corp.

A. Y. Foundation



Susanne Y. Santos
President



Michelle Dee-Santos
Executive Vice President

THE SOCIAL development arm of the Yuchengco Group was established by Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco in 1970. Initially known as the Bayanihan Foundation, it became the AY Foundation in due time, implementing the "Social Return on Investment" (SROI) philosophy enunciated by Ambassador Yuchengco. AYF undertakes programs funded from annual contributions of the Yuchengco Group of Companies. These programs promote the following causes: education through grants for scholarships, professional chairs and school building, public health through surgical and medical missions in remote communities; relief and rehabilitation through aid to disaster-stricken areas; awards for community service and national discipline, other grants to promote art and culture, environment protection and temporary shelter for street children.

RCBC's Social Commitment

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corporation, along with the rest of the Yuchengco Group, is committed to socially-relevant programs that affirm the inherent dignity of the Filipino and his ability to change for the better. Besides being a major contributor to the AY Foundation – the social development arm of the Group – RCBC has on its own embarked on projects that address a wide range of concerns.

In 1990, the first RCBC Sikap Awards was successfully held. The thrust of the awards was to give recognition to the most outstanding community based small-scale livelihood projects in the country. In 1994, changes were made in the criteria to include projects that are not financially viable but are impacting positively on the people's welfare.

In 1991, RCBC saw the need to develop a "Filipino export culture." To address this need, the blank identified the root problem: misaligned Filipino values. RCBC made its moral obligation to help re-orient the people's values. Thus, it embarked on a program aimed at attacking the crippling Filipino mindset of "puede na yan" or "biglang yaman" and, in their place, promoting discipline and work values through the mass media. For this effort, RCBC received a special citation from the Center for International Trade Exposition and Mission (CITEM) of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Not satisfied with merely talking about the "Filipino Export Culture," the bank put up the export Dragon Desk as an information service for first-time and would-be exporters. It launched the Export Dragon Lecture Series which brought into the country trade experts from six top export markets in Asia, Europe and the US to talk about "how to do business" with their home countries to Filipino exporters and businessmen free of charge. Moreover, an RCBC Dragon Fund was created offering low-cost working capital for small and medium-scale exporters who have little or no collateral.

The bank's social commitment is also multi-prolonged. After its successful "National Discipline for National Survival" campaign, RCBC addressed another important national concern: the preservation of the environment. It adopted the theme, "National Discipline for a Green Philippines," and urged businesses and citizens to start planting trees.

A story contest on the environment, the "Kuwentong Kalikasan Katha Ng Kabataan," was launched in 1994 among grade school students to make them aware of the urgent need to preserve Mother Earth. The bank believes that the attribute of Filipino children towards the care of the environment should be properly directed while they are still young so that they would not commit the same mistakes their elders did. In 1997, the writing contest was expanded in scope. It was opened to all grade school students nationwide. To date, the contest has recognized 26 creative and talented young writers. A special book, a compilation of the winning stories for the past five years of Kuwentong Kalikasan, was published in 1998.

The story-writing contest and the special book won the 1999 Anvil Awards of Excellence in the Outstanding PR Program and PR Tool categories respectively. The program also received the Pearl Anniversary Award from the Reading Association of the Philippines for literacy program.

With discipline as the guiding principle, RCBC embarked on promoting the value of punctuality. The Filipino-On-Time campaign was launched in 1994 which encouraged all citizens to change the "Filipino habit" of always being late in everything. The campaign stressed punctuality as a supreme virtue. It proudly proclaimed that being on time in delivering services is an essential tool for progress.

Another campaign took off in 1995, which focused on the importance of the family's role in value-formation among children. The campaign emphasized the fact that the family – as the basic unit of our society – must take the lead in teaching and imparting positive values to children to make them good citizens.

Recognizing the heroes

Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco, RCBC chair, established the National Discipline Award under the auspices of the A.Y. Foundation in 1990. The program honors Filipino students whose values of self-sacrifice, courage, integrity and discipline make them exemplary citizens. With some 500 high schools participating, the award is given to a graduating student who best exemplary the spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice. To date, more than 3,500 students from the 500 participating high schools nationwide have received the award which carries it a P5,000 stipend and a gold medal bearing the image of San Lorenzo Ruiz.

Another award, the Mother Teresa Award, was established jointly by RCBC, the A.Y. Foundation and the Manila Jaycees focusing public attention on, and giving recognition to individuals who epitomize the virtues of selflessness and true Christian service.

In 1996, the centennial of Jose Rizal's martyrdom, RCBC felt it proper to rekindle interest among the Filipino youth the values our national hero espoused. RCBC thus launched an institutional "Love and Respect for Flag" campaign as part of its participation in the Philippine Centennial Program. The bank distributed Philippine flags for free in many schools and municipalities throughout the country. This lasted from the Rizal Martyrdom Centennial in December 1996 to the Republic Centennial in June 1998.

RCBC has on its own embarked on projects that address a wide range of concerns

RCBC PLAZA

AY Foundation

ITS ANNUAL National Discipline Awards Program has so far recognized more than 5,000 youth leaders throughout the country, each receiving P5,000 and a gold medal bearing the image of San Lorenzo Ruiz. It has also sponsored the yearly Mother Teresa Awards in conjunction with the Manila Jay-

In the year of the snake, no other card company gives you a better deal.

Some of the many destinations you can visit for free!

SAMPLE AWARDS TABLE

AIRMILES Destinations	100,000	200,000	300,000	400,000	500,000	600,000	700,000	800,000	900,000	1,000,000
Philippine Destination	50% OFF	FREE								
Hong Kong		50% OFF	75% OFF	FREE						
Singapore Bangkok KL			50% OFF	75% OFF	FREE					
Tokyo/Sydney				50% OFF	75% OFF	FREE				
San Francisco/LA					50% OFF	75% OFF	FREE			
Rome London Paris						50% OFF	75% OFF	FREE		
New York/Miami							50% OFF	75% OFF	FREE	
Round the World										FREE

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Bankard Airmiles gives you full control. Here's why:

- Unlike other mileage programs, Bankard Airmiles lets you get your airline ticket whenever you're ready, wherever you want to go.
- Unlike other mileage programs, Bankard Airmiles lets you fly to any international or local destination on any airline of your choice.
- Unlike other mileage programs, Bankard Airmiles lets you enroll one or more of your Bankard credit cards.

Bankard Airmiles is part of Bankard's Rewards program where you earn Airmiles points on your spending that can be used for free travel. Accumulation of Airmiles points goes on indefinitely for as long as you are a Bankard Airmiles member. You may also use the unredeemed Airmiles for purchase of any item in the Bankard Airmiles catalogue.

Your P1,000 enrollment fee goes to many Bankard programs which contributes to social development such as:

- The promotion of the performing arts thru Bankard TicketCharge.
- Ideas for national growth thru AHEAD magazine.
- The education of streetchildren via C.H.A.R.G.E.
- Bankard's Best Awards recognizing outstanding merchants and cardholders.

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AWARDS FOR 'KUWENTONG KALIKASAN'
Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco, chair of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (second from left) and Maryann A. munoz, head, external communications unit of RCBC hold a trophy from the Reading Association of the Philippines. The award was given in recognition of RCBC's Kuwentong Kalikasan project, where RCBC was cited for "providing children a unique literacy - literary experience and a venue for expressing their creative talents for a worthy cause." Looking on are Virgilio Q. Pantaleon, corporate communications counselor of the Yuchengco Group of Companies (left) and Guia Y. Santos-Qua, executive assistant to Ambassador Yuchengco.

YUCHENGCO CENTER FOR EAST ASIA
Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco (seated right) established the Yuchengco Center for East Asia, based in De La Salle University -. Taft Avenue, to help create greater awareness and understanding of the Asia-Pacific region. Among other things, the Center undetakes academic and policy research, sponsors seminars on the economies, political systems and cultures of China, Japan and Korea, as well as the relations of these countries with the Philippines. With him are the trustees of the Center who include Bro. Andrew Gonzales, FSC and Waseda University president Takayasu Okushima (seated, left and center respectively) former Prime Minister Cesar E.A. Virata (standing left), Dr. Bong Su Lee of Korea, Ambassador Chen Songlu of China, Dr. Wilfredo V. Villacorta (4th, 5th and 6th from left), Alfonso S: YuchengcoIII and Virgilio Q. Pantaleon, corporate secretary (extreme right).

Y.G.C. CONGRATULATES THE YUCHENGCO DEALERSHIPS FOR ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES FOR THE YEAR 2000!

HONDA

POST SERVICE SURVEY PROGRAM

3rd Place : HONDA CARS MANILA
Vic Y. Logarta, Branch Manager
2nd Place : HONDA CARS KALOOKAN
Johnny S. Fetalvero, General Manager
1st Place : HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Gene C. de Jesus, GM & COO

AFTER SALES SERVICE CONTEST

2nd Place : HONDA CARS MANILA
Vic Y. Logarta, Branch Manager
1st Place : HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Gene C. de Jesus, GM & COO

SERVICE DEALER OF THE YEAR

HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Jojo M. Aliganga, Service Manager

PARTS HIGHEST SALES ATTAINMENT

HONDA CARS KALOOKAN
Dem E. Sayman, Parts Manager

PARTS DEALER OF THE YEAR

HONDA CARS MANILA
Jerry B. Lagunilla, Parts Manager

PROMPT PAYMENT AWARD

HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Eve R. Gutierrez, Chief Financial Officer
Flor B. Manaois, Finance Manager

BEST IN CUSTOMER RELATIONS

HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Archie C. Bataclan, CRD Head
Arlene P. Donato, CRD Supervisor

TOP SELLING DEALER AWARD

HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Cecille R. Mabutas, Sales Manager

HONDA INT'L TECHNICIAN'S CONTEST

HONDA CARS QUEZON CITY
Arnold C. Bergola, Service Technician

ISUZU

#1 IN TOTAL VEHICLE SALES

ISUZU MANILA, INC.
Edwin T. Basilio, Sales Manager
Paolo Y. Abaya, General Manager

Grand Post International opens Philippine office

GRAND Post International (Asia) Limited (GPI) has developed its business in Hong Kong so rapidly that the company decided to explore the Philippines market.

The new Philippine branch was inaugurated Saturday at the Enterprise Center in Makati City. Guests included TV host Cory Quirino and FilExport president and chair of Export Industry Bank Sergio Ortiz Luis Jr. Glenda Abuyuan of Grand Post International headed the hosting ceremony and Calvin Milliado provided the entertainment.

Grand Post International Philippines Inc. provides excellent service and offers the best prices in the market. They also offer good business opportunities to clients and members.

Under the GPI's superb Bonus Reward Scheme, members can easily build a strong business portfolio by inviting friends, relatives and associate all over the world to join its grand family.

Grand Post International Philippines Inc. is established to provide retail department-store and online shopping services, and is the agent for branded products. Product range encompasses personal care, family products, audio systems, computer equipment, foods and beverages, home appliances, mobile phones, furniture, cameras, leather goods and other additional product lines in the future.

It has also established an Internet presence, combining electronic commercial trading and profit and making concepts that enable to globalize online distribution network.

For more information call 884-8420.

Pedro R. Sabido monument, park inaugurated in Albay

THE MUNICIPALITY of Polangui, Albay paid tribute to their homegrown historical patron, the late Pedro R. Sabido, in recognition of his devotion to the country and the Filipino people by putting up the Sabido monument and park, thus preserving his legacy of distinguished public service.

The unveiling of his monument and the inauguration of the park last Saturday was spearheaded by Polangui Mayor Brett Joseph B. Salalima, who worked with Crispin Sabido, long-time associate and confidante of the late senator and Gloria S. Aguirre, the late senator's granddaughter, an active community leader and generous entrepreneur.

Born to humble parents in the quiet town of Polangui, Albay on Oct. 19, 1894, diplomat, statesman and lawmaker, Pedro R. Sabido is one of the pioneer advocates of economic rights for the Filipinos. A member of the Philippine Legislature in the time of President Mauel L. Quezon, Pedro R. Sabido was well-known for authoring significant economic laws that facilitated the creation of the National Abaca and Other Fibers Corporation (NAFCO), instrumental to the survival of the local abaca industry as well as the creation of the Philippine Cottage Industries Administration (PHICIA), which provided generous loans to small-time manufacturers.

Serving untiringly as the duly elected Representative of the 3rd District of Albay for 16 years, Pedro R. Sabido was also appointed the Philippine ambassador to Spain and the Vatican in 1955. Upon his return to the Philippines, he was elected to the Senate where he was voted by Senate Press Club as Outstanding Senator of the Year for two consecutive years.

National Dental Health Week set Feb. 3-9

THE PHILIPPINEA Dental Association and Colgate celebrate a committed partnership for good oral health with the staging of the 51st National Health Week from Feb. 3-9 under the theme "Munting Ngiti Tungo Sa Maningning na Kinabukasan."

Pursuant to Presidential Proclamation No. 281, the National Dental Health Week is a series of activities that promote dental health awareness among the general public. Colgate, the world leader in oral care, supports this vision and has remained steadfast in its support of this yearly endeavor.

Opening ceremonies will be held on Feb. 4 at the Luneta Grandstand to be graced by officials from the PDA, Colgate and DOH. This will be followed by a motorcade dubbed "Alay Parada 2001" and simultaneously opening ceremonies in Cebu, Ozamis, Laguna and Angeles. There will also be a nationwide community outreach program, indigency clinics, cleft lip and palate operation, lectures and a slogan-making contest.

Highlights of the celebration are free dental check-ups and Colgate samples in various barangays in Metro Manila and special Colgate products offered at great price-offs in supermarkets nationwide.

ROQUE NATURAL SCIENCE LABORATORIES
The inauguration of the Roque Natural Sciences Laboratories at the University of Santo Tomas Graduate School held recently was led by its sponsors, Dr. Ramon Ricardo A. Roque, deputy secretary general of the House of Representative and Dr. Feliciano D. Roque Jr., managing principal of the FD Roque, Jr, and Associates and former dean of College of Business Administration of the University of the East. Officials of the University of Santo Tomas who attended the inauguration include Dr. Tamerlane R. Lana, OP, rector; Fr. Antonio Aureada, OP, STh.D, vice rector for academic affairs and graduate school regent; Dr. Fortunato Sevilla III, assistant to the rector for research and development; Dr. Lilian Sison, graduate school dean; Dr. Maribel Nonato, Dr. Michael Anthony C. Vasco and Dr. Belen Tangco.

Imedeen now at Imart.

IMEDEEN, a breakthrough in skin science that works from within, now brings beauty and convenience with recent addition of Imart to their growing list of retailers. Imedeen is now available at Imart, a 24-hour convenience store and pharmacy that allows phone-orders and home delivery. Imedeen users and those who want to have youthful-looking skin can now enjoy the convenience of buying Imedeen through Imart's delivery number at 781-1111 any time, any day. Imedeen is a natural skin care tablet that helps revitalize skin from within and is ideal for those experiencing premature skin aging brought about by sun exposure, stress and unhealthy lifestyle.

INFOTECH

LEO MAGNO, Editor

Gov't IT leaders under fire

National Computer Center, DOST chiefs slammed by employees

BY ERWIN LEMUEL G. OLIVA

INSPIRED by the People Power II movement that forced Joseph Estrada out of Malacañang, National Computer Center employees wearing black bands last week staged noontime pickets in front of the agency's premises, holding placards claiming that its chief—Ramon "Ike" Señeres—is a "virus" to the agency. NCC employees want Señeres to resign immediately.

Meanwhile, in the quiet premises of the Department of Science and Technology, some employees also took to the streets as they began their week-long lunch break protests against the reappointment of Couples for Christ member Filemon Uriarte Jr. as science secretary.

The employees were charging both Señeres and Uriarte of graft and corruption, among others. Both officials denied the allegations hurled at them.

A former Management Information Systems head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Señeres was appointed by former President Estrada as NCC deputy director in 1998. Uriarte is a multi-awarded scientist who finished chemical engineering. Before he was appointed science secretary in 1999, he served in the Asean Secretariat as director of the Functional Cooperation Bureau for seven years. He also served as undersecretary of the agency. Uriarte succeeded former DOST Chief William Padolina.

NCC virus?

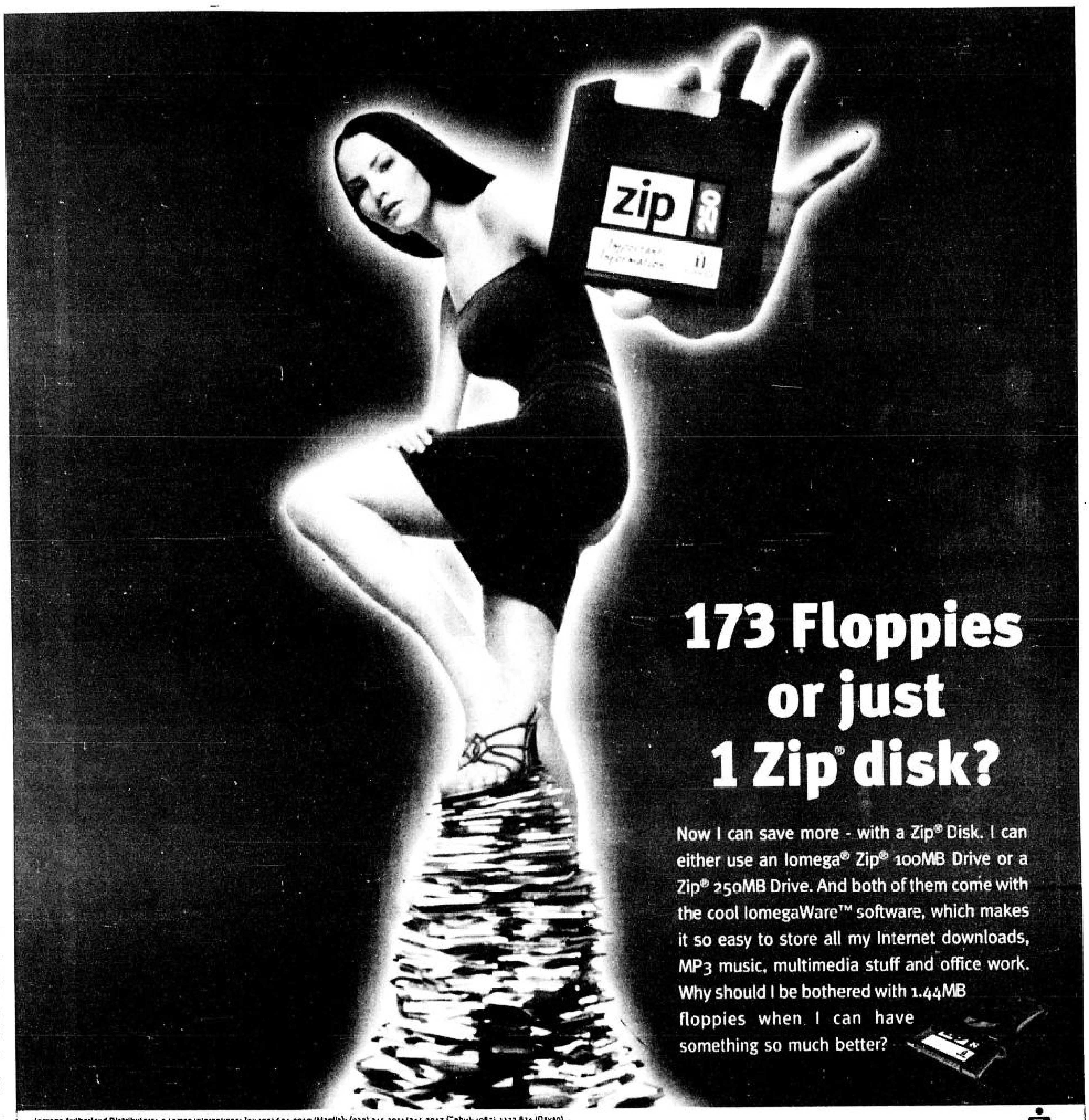
"We want change and we want the President (Macapagal) to know this," said Anna Marie Montecastro, spokesperson of the Concerned Officers and Staff of the NCC. She and close to 50 employees marched around the NCC last week, calling for Señeres' ouster.

The group had sent an appeal to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to investigate alleged irregular actions and policies by the director general. The group had also forwarded documents to Executive Secretary Renato de Villa showing irregularities allegedly committed by the director general, including purported malversation of funds and mismanagement.

The Department of Science and Technology eventually interceded in the case.

DOST Undersecretary Rufino Lirag Jr. decided to become the referee between the employees and Señeres who maintained that he

GOV'T/ P.B16



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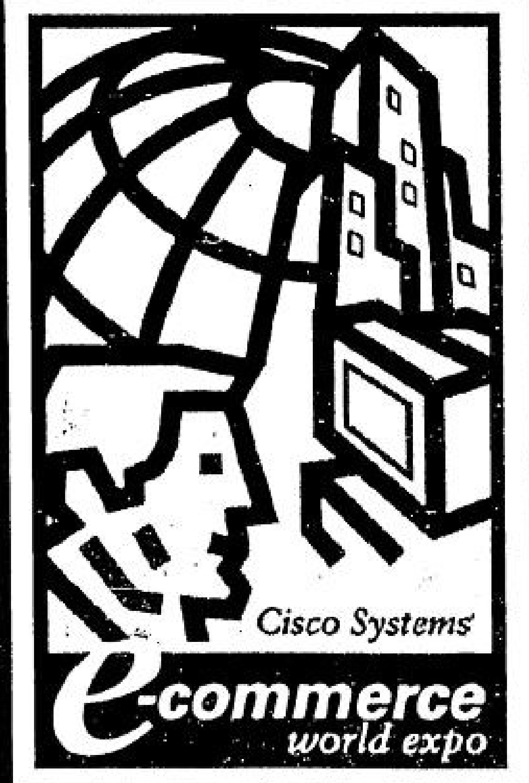

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• eSurfing Contest
• Celebrity eChat

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE*

TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER/COMPANY	TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER/COMPANY	TIME	TOPIC/SPEAKER/COMPANY
10:00-10:45	**Registration**	11:15-12:45	**Internet & eCommerce: The Business Perspective** Robert Poole, Customer Solutions Manager, Internet Business Solutions Grp., Cisco Systems Asia Pacific	2:30-4:00	**Internet & eCommerce: Securing Your Network** Rio Hernandez, Systems Engineering Manager, Cisco Systems Philippines
10.45-10.55	**Opening Video**	12.45-1:30	**Lunch Break**	4:00-4:30	**Break**
10:55-11:00	**Opening and Welcome Remarks** Gary Jackson, VP-Asia Pacific, Cisco Systems	1:30-2:30	**Measuring the Internet & eCommerce Economy: A Global & Local Perspective** Joseph Puthussery, Director for Marketing Cisco Systems Asia Pacific	4:30-5:30	**Internet & eCommerce: The Infrastructure Needed** Roland Ong, Networking Consultant Cisco Systems Philippines
11:00-11:05	**Introduction of Keynote Speaker** Noel Rivera, Country Manager, Cisco Systems Philippines			5:30-6:30	**PSE Plugged: Online Stock Trading** Peter Chua-Chief Technology Officer & Juanis Barredo, Sales & Training Head, CitiseconOnline.Com
11:05-11:15	**Keynote Address** Senator Ramon "Jun" Magsaysay, eCommerce Bill Author				
10:00-10:50	**Registration**	12:00-1:00	**Lunch Break**	3:30-4:30	**How to .COM your Business** Ferdie Leono, Technical Consultant Sun Microsystems
10:50-11:00	**Opening Video**	1:00-2:00	**Microsoft.Net Vision** Jojo Ayson, Corporate Account Technical Manager, E-Commerce Solutions Group, Microsoft Philippines	4:30-5:30	**E-Store Exchange Session**
11:00-12:00	**ECO Structure Business Impact, Highly Available E-Business Infrastructure Initiative** Kah-hoe Mah, Director for Alliance Development, EMC Asia Pacific	2:00-3:00	**IBM Session**	5:30-6:30	**Sources of Funding for My Startup (VC & Incubation)** Gina Oris, Director & Arcy Canumay, Director IAyala
		3:00-3:30	**Break**		

*ABOVE SCHEDULE APPLIES TO THE TWO-DAY PAID SEMINAR.

Government information technology leaders under fire

(From page B15)

had done nothing wrong. Señeres also said he would not resign because he is a career service professional enjoying security of tenure. However, he said he was open to having "reconciliation dialogues" with employees asking for his ouster.

"I've been extending the hand of reconciliation. I offered my hand of peace and even wanted a dialogue with them. I have even appealed to the point of begging them not to push through with the protest," Señeres said last week, alluding to his prior knowledge of the employees' plan of staging a protest.

Asked if he would impose sanctions on employees who joined the protest, he said that "they have the right to free expression," and that he would even be the first to support this right.

"But what they're asking for—which is for me to resign—is difficult. This is a job and even a cause for me. *Hindi ko basta basta maiiwanan ito* (I cannot just leave this)," Señeres told reporters.

Hmm...sounds familiar?

Señeres also claimed that De Villa told him to "stay put" during a visit to his office weeks ago.

Meanwhile, members of the Union of DOST Employees Association (Unidea) last week sent a resolution to President Macapagal, opposing Uriarte's reappointment as science secretary. They alleged that Uriarte—who is known to be an active member of the Catholic lay group Couples for Christ—had attempted to commit graft and corruption.

The Unidea is the umbrella organization of the rank-and-file employees of the department and represents its 21 offices.

Uriarte resigned as science secretary on Dec. 21, saying he wanted to devote his time to the private sector. It was then when ousted president Joseph Estrada's Cabinet members started leaving at the height of the impeachment trial.

Two weeks ago, President Macapagal decided to reappoint to Uriarte to the science secretary post.

This prompted groups like the Concerned DOST Employees to circulate letters asking for Uriarte's ouster. They claim to have received reports that the Couples for Christ group was allegedly endorsing the appointment of Uriarte. Another group called the Concerned DOST Rank and File employees, in an unsigned letter, also asked the President to reconsider Uriarte's appointment, saying he "lacked the moral authority" to lead the agency.

DOST Assistant Secretary Apolonio B. Anota last week resigned in protest of the reappointment of Uriarte.

The graft and corruption charge against Señeres involves a multi-million-peso project called the National Crime Information Service (NCIS). The Philippine National Police, the Supreme Court, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, National Police Commission, Bureau of Corrections, the Department of Interior and Local Government, Bureau of Fire Protection and Department of Justice have pooled their resources to build the NCIS.

The NCC was tasked to oversee implementation of the project.

On June 2000, Montecastro, spokesperson for the NCC employees staging the protest, alleged that Señeres asked her to sign the transfer of P139 million in funds for the NCIS project deposited at the Land Bank of the Philippines to NCC's account at Centennial Bank. When she refused, Señeres reassigned her to another department, and hired someone to sign the transfer of funds, she claimed.

Señeres, for his part, denied this allegation, but admitted that the fund transfer was made.

Montecastro pointed out that Centennial Bank is not an accredited government depository bank, contrary to Señeres' claims in a letter sent to the INQUIRER.

Señeres had insisted that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas accredited the bank but he affirmed that at least P600 million worth of funds for the NCIS project had been transferred to NCC accounts in different banks for the year 2000.

Señeres said that Montecastro refused to sign the transfer prompting him to designate a signing officer for the NCIS project.

In a separate interview, Montecastro said she refused because she suspected that something was fishy with the fund transfer.

In a letter sent to the INQUIRER, Señeres admitted that Centennial Bank is not a government bank, but it is owned by a savings and loan association organized by government employees. He added that his decision to transfer funds to this bank over other government depository banks is a "result of our evaluation of their competitive offers."

GOV'T/ P.B17

Winblad . . .

(From page B17)

In the past, a small number of investors focused on startups. In the period from 1998 to 2000, even later stage investors had moved toward earlier and earlier stage companies. This couples with the creation of incubators caused too many startups to be funded. Incubators are rapidly disappearing and later stage investors have moved back to their normal investing stage (investing after the company is profitable). This should eliminate some of the over-funding of new sectors, but not all.

WINBLAD

While before the industry saw a lot of hype and a gold rush mentality over tech stocks, after the backlash we've seen the opposite extreme of pessimism over pure dotcoms. How do you strike the balance between hype and gripe? What are the fundamentals you consider to separate the dotcom wannabes from the real thing?

Unfortunately the press does not like to cover balance, so even as we move away from extremes it will be difficult for anyone to notice! With the uncertainty in the public markets, venture capitalists will stray away from Internet companies that exhaust huge sums of cash. One criterion is the ability to determine the cash needs and efficiency of a business. Over-optimistic business models will not be funded. The ability to attract partners. The requirement to solve real business problems. Experience in the management team. Longer due diligence cycles. These are now all part of separating the wannabes from the real thing.

What do you see as the next big thing in computing—the area where you would place your bets as an investor?

Our core focus is software. We prefer not to indicate where we are investing (remember the herd instinct), but it is clear that inter-enterprise computing will drive the growth of many new companies.

You've certainly blazed the trail for women in the IT industry and have become one of the most influential people in the digital age. How would you assess the progress that women have made in landing CEO positions in a still male-dominated IT industry? What changes are needed to encourage more women to go into IT and excel in this field?

I have been in the industry now for 26 years. A strong technical background is useful. Women need to realize that a CEO position is not necessarily the starting point and to achieve success requires a long term commitment to their industry. The IT field is a great field for women.

Have you ever felt discriminated against, in the past or present, for being a successful female IT executive? Do you think some men are intimidated by your success?

No and not in the technology area.

If you don't mind, could you tell us what you liked most about your relationship with Bill Gates and the "virtual dates" you had with him? What would you say was the most attractive, and, conversely, most irritating thing about him? As someone who's known him for a long time, what can you say about the claim of critics that he's a ruthless, unfeeling businessman out to crush competition and rule the world?

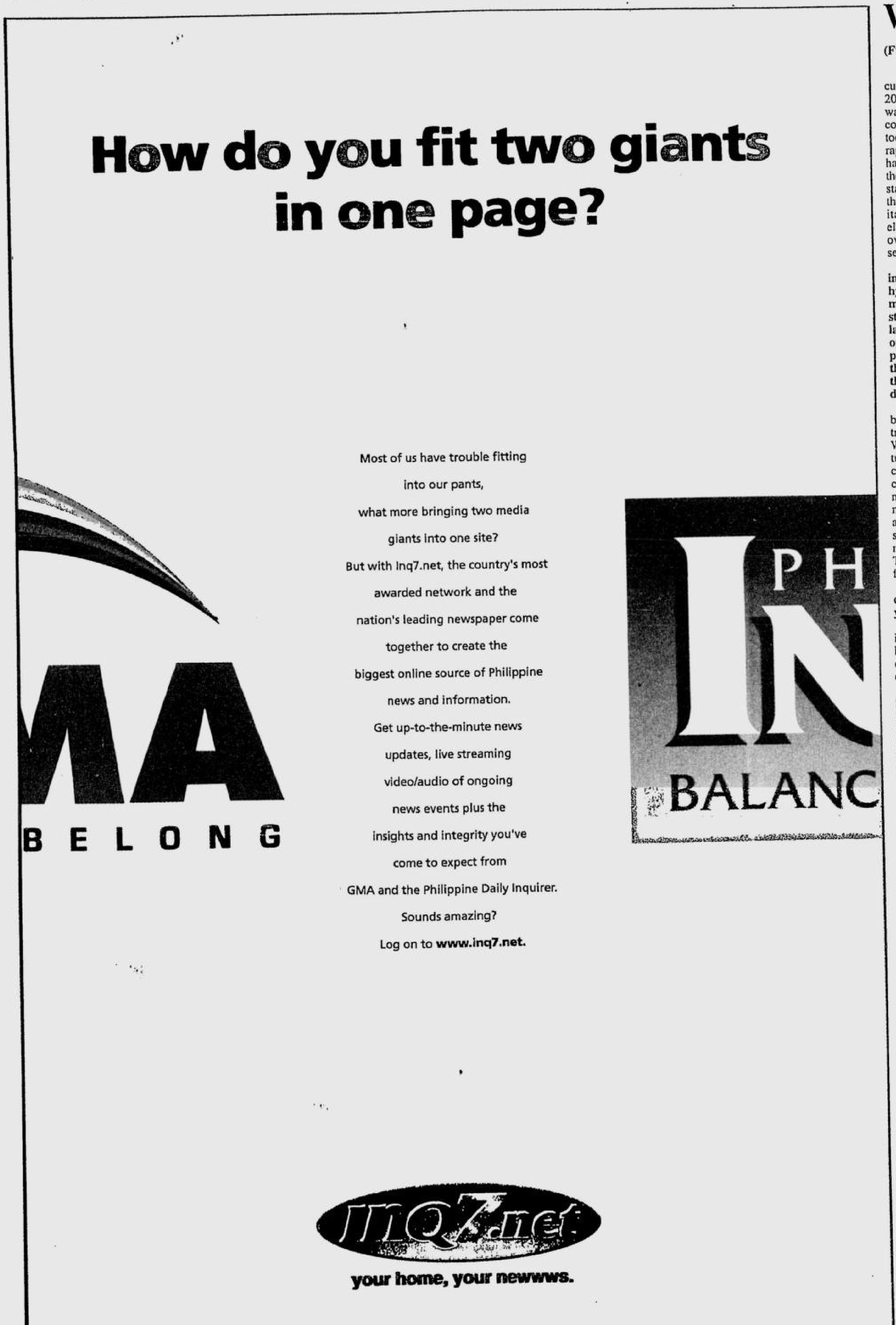
Bill and I have been friends now for 17 years. Bill is extremely hardworking and focused. This has extended not only to the creation and building of Microsoft but to the commitment he has made to world health and education with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The foundation has already demonstrated that Bill is a broad thinker with a commitment of his mind and money to initiatives that change the world for the better.

Online pet store dies

SAN FRANCISCO—Dig another grave in the dotcom pet cemetery.

Petopia.com, which sold most of its assets to Petco Animal Supplies Inc. in December, filed papers with the US Securities and Exchange Commission on Friday to cancel its $100 million initial public offering and announce it's no longer doing business. Petopia marketed itself as the destination for pet lovers when it launched in August 1999. It offered food, grooming and health care products for furry friends, fish and other animals.

Petopia laid off about 60 percent of its work force in October. Some employees moved to San Diego to work on Petco's online operation. *AP*



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Winblad: Separate the real thing from dotcom wannabes

BY JOEY G. ALARILLA

MEDIA, whether traditional or online, is fond of extremes. Which is why after the hype over the early gold-rush mentality of the New Economy, the dotcom crash last year brought about extreme pessimism.

Ann Winblad, however, has been in the information technology (IT) industry for 26 years. Needless to say, she has seen many examples of the "next big thing" come and go. As a seasoned tech investor who co-founded in 1989 the highly successful Hummer Winblad Venture Partners venture capital (VC) firm, Winblad has developed a knack for distinguishing the real thing from dotcom wannabes. Hummer Winblad owns the distinction of being the first VC firm to focus exclusively on software. And while it had its share of setbacks during last year's dotcom massacre, the firm remains a force to reckon with in the New Economy.

So is Winblad, who has repeatedly made it to Time's Cyber Elite list of the most influential people in the digital age. Last year, Winblad railed against the "theme park" mentality in tech investments, meaning the hype over B2C (business to consumer) at one point, to be replaced by B2B (business to business), then B2B exchanges—you get the picture. Instead, she stresses the need for the industry to wean itself away from all the hype and focus on the business fundamentals.

As a pioneer in IT, Winblad has also paved the way for other women to excel in this demanding field. She said that, in all her years in IT, she has never encountered a problem with men underestimating her. As those who have met her can attest to, when Winblad talks, people listen. Of course, in IT circles, Winblad's "virtual dates" with Microsoft Corp. Chair Bill Gates when they were still starting to make a mark in IT have also become legendary. Winblad and Gates would watch the same movie in different parts of the country at the same time and then talk about it using their cell phones.

Though she was busy traveling in Europe when the INQUIRER e-mailed her, Winblad graciously took the time to share her thoughts with us. Here's what she had to say:

After the dotcom backlash we saw last year in the stock market, would you say that venture capitalists are still a lot more skeptical about investing in dotcoms nowadays?

Companies that are targeting the consumer versus the corporation are currently out of favor with venture capitalists and the public markets, especially those companies that require substantial capital. Pure Internet retailers are especially challenging given the costs of distribution centers and brand building and the new competition from established retailers.

You've criticized "theme park" investing in articles—pointing out that first venture capitalists tripped all over themselves to invest in B2C companies, then B2B, online exchanges and now optical broadband and wireless. Do you think "theme" investing is still the trend and what could be done to correct this kind of business mentality?

WINBLAD/ p.B16

Government information technology leaders under fire

(From page B16)

He said that he could have thought of giving the account to another government depository bank where the brother of Montecastro is the branch manager.

"That could have made her more cooperative, but I have to make decisions that are most favorable to the government," Señeres said.

The INQUIRER called up Montecastro to comment on Señeres' statement and said that his statement was "inaccurate." She did not elaborate.

Brokering deals?

The NCC is currently the body tasked to evaluate the information system (IS) plans of government agencies and offices. The work, however, is limited to evaluating and recommending solutions, and not endorsing products or solutions to government agencies.

Montecastro, however, alleged that Señeres had been using the NCC as a front for brokering deals with different contractors.

NCC, for instance, signed a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Agriculture (DA) involving an $849,000 Web-hosting project. Señeres, she pointed out, signed the agreement without proper consultations with staff hired to evaluate government projects.

Montecastro alleged that the DA had already identified a third-party service provider to host DA's Web services and site even before both agencies signed the agreement.

Señeres denied that the NCC had been brokering deals between government and the private sector.

"The issue of brokering deals might have come up because as a consolidator, the NCC finds itself in between the primary service provider and the client—government agencies. There should be nothing wrong with that, as long as all government rules on bidding are followed, and in compliance with Commission on Audit rules and regulations," Señeres said.

"NCC is supposed to build government information infrastructure and the government website portal, among others. Since we don't have budgets for these projects, our only alternative now is to buy time and space from the private sector, instead of building it ourselves. And as long as bidding rules are followed, I do not see why anybody should complain," the NCC chief said. "I think the root of all this protest is on their belief that the NCC should only be limited to approving IS plans of government and giving training and services to government offices.

Señeres argued that such an outlook is "self-serving" because the NCC only limits its services to government. He said that the NCC, as a government body, should serve the public.

Nonetheless, he has recently decided to refocus NCC's efforts and policies on the original mandate of the agency but with a caveat: Money that has to be spent on NCC-related projects will have to be funded by private organizations.

"*Sayang naman ang aming* resources. (It's a shame if our resources will go to waste.) I think we can also offer it to non-government organizations and small- to medium-sized enterprises," the director general added.

The NCC has to do more work aside from what it has been mandated to do with the passage of the E-Commerce Act of 2000, according to Señeres. But the agency has few resources to spare. For this reason, constant reorganizations had been implemented at the NCC to allow him to place people in projects that needed more attention, he added.

The Department of Budget and Management has allotted P74 million to the NCC for 2001, Señeres said.

Frustrated corruption?

Back at the DOST, Uriarte also stands accused of "attempted graft and corruption," according to a letter submitted by the Unidea to President Macapagal.

Nelson Beniabon , the president and spokesperson of Unidea, claimed that Uriarte attempted to defraud the government last year. Thus, the group wrote the President on Jan. 23, voicing out their reservation about the reappointment of Uriarte as Science and Technology chief.

In a resolution, Unidea accused Uriarte of "misappropriation of the Engineering and Science Education Project (Esep) funds for the foreign training of certain DOST personnel." The allegation involved Uriarte and officials close to him, saying that they attempted to use government money for a short-term training in the area of Management of Technology at the University of Wisconsin in the United States.

The World Bank-funded training program was launched in 1992 and ended in 1998. Unidea president Beniabon said that after the program was concluded, the Esep program had savings amounting to $120,000.

On July 2000, however, Beniabon said that a vigilant group of rank-and-file employees discovered alleged attempts by Uriarte to use the Esep savings to fund the expenditure of trainees to the University of Wisconsin.

Government trips using government money require the approval of the Office of the President. Beniabon claims that upon knowing that getting travel approval from the Office of the President is difficult, Uriarte sent word to the DFA declaring that the government will not spend for the trip.

A document obtained by the INQUIRER indicated that Uriarte wrote DFA Secretary Domingo Siazon Jr. on July 3, 2000, saying that 10 individuals from the DOST were being sent for training to the United States on official time from Aug. 7 to 25.

The letter also indicated "all expenses to be incurred relative to their trip including costs of international fare, daily allowance and accommodation shall be borne by the University of Wisconsin."

The Philippine government, the letter continued, would only spend for the payment of the team's salaries while abroad, among others.

Unidea has sent similar documents to prove their allegations to Ms Macapagal last week.

"He (Uriarte) couldn't claim that he didn't know that government money was involved because the executive committee, which he is part of, knows what Esep is all about," Beniabon said.

Another document obtained by the INQUIRER showed that the Office of the Secretary called a special executive committee meeting on May 10, 2000. The meeting discussed "use of Esep savings for a short-term training in Management of Technology at the University of Wisconsin, visits to selected virtual centers for information technology and monitoring of Esep scholars."

The proposal came from Assistant Secretary Imelda Rodriguez.

In a separate memorandum by Rodriguez for Uriarte dated April 24, 2000, it was pointed out that Esep has an outstanding balance of $120,000 considered as savings.

"In this regard, we would like to seek your clearance in the use of said savings which would otherwise revert to the National Treasury," Rodriguez wrote.

Uriarte, however, appeared to have not signed the document.

Railroading

Uriarte was also accused of "railroading" the process of selecting delegates for the training program to the University of Wisconsin.

Beniabon claimed that a selection of 10 delegates for the Esep training "did not go through the Staff and Development Committee, which is in charge of evaluating and selecting delegates for training activities."

Uriarte allegedly handpicked delegates to the Esep training, according to Beniabon.

In an interview last week, acting Sceince Secretary Rogelio Panlasigui, however, maintained that the issue had been resolved last July 2000 because Uriarte decided not to push through with the project. Panlasigui also insisted that Uriarte knew that the Esep savings was government money.

Beniabon, however, thinks otherwise.

"They did not pursue the plan because we foiled them," Beniabon said. "But this does not mean that no crime was committed. For instance, if someone attempted to kill someone and failed, that's called frustrated murder."

People Power 2 aftershock

URIARTE

SEÑERES

Two of the country's key people in the field of information technology governance are under fire, with their own employees asking them to step down in the tradition of People Power, Filipino style

Uriarte's denial

On Thursday morning last week, Uriarte denied all allegations brought out by DOST employees against him.

"The first time I heard the allegations against me, I decided to keep silent. However, when my mother called me up Wednesday from San Diego crying, I decided to break my silence," Uriarte said during a press conference on Thursday morning. Uriarte has remained mum on accusations against him since Monday.

"I know all allegations against me are false. So I'm here now to regain my honor and to clear my name," Uriarte continued, as he explained why he asked acting Science Secretary Panlasigui to organize the day's forum with the DOST employees.

Uriarte said that the savings amounting to $120,000 remains untouched and is currently with the University of Wisconsin.

He also clarified that the allegations of handpicking of delegates to the training program at the University of Wisconsin using Esep savings was nothing but a "misunderstanding" between the employees and the executive committee, which did the selection.

"I can categorically say that there has not been any attempt at graft and corruption in that program," he said. He admitted, though, that there might have been lapses in the process of selection of the delegates to the University of Wisconsin training program. The program involved sending 10 delegates to the university.

Since the program had been scrapped, the money remained untouched, he said.

Unidea's resolution, however, insisted that while the money was accounted for, there was an attempt to use Esep savings for the training program. They claim that they have documents to prove this.

"We were acting in good faith. There is no tinge of graft and corruption and abuse of power in that (Esep) program," Uriarte insisted.

Prior to breaking his silence, Uriarte had a dialogue with the employees asking for his ouster, and indicated that the dialogue had "positive results."

Members of the Unidea, however, indicated that the dialogue was inconclusive. Last week, they have decided to submit a signed resolution to Ms Macapagal expressing their reservations on Uriarte's reappointment.

During Uriarte's forum with DOST employees on Thursday, Unidea members were absent as they were still deciding on whether or not they would submit a signed resolution to Malacañang.

As of press time, Beniabon said that Unidea members were still deliberating on whether to submit documents supporting allegations hurled against Uriarte to Malacañang.

Feeling that he had already aired his side, Uriarte decided not to comment on the issue until Feb. 16, when he would make his decision whether or not to accept his reappointment. Executive Secretary De Villa had called up Uriarte on Tuesday to confirm his reappointment. He admitted that he only knew of his reappointment through the news.

During his first press conference as science secretary-designate, Uriarte said he is postponing his decision to accept his reappointment because he has other obligations to fulfill. He is working on a paper for the United Nations until Feb. 15.

To ban or not to ban

Señeres last week banned employees of the state-run computer agency from staging further mass actions.

He issued a series of memorandums reiterating government's rules on protest actions as the NCC employees continued with their lunchtime rallies to push for the ouster of Señeres.

However, on one memorandum issued on Jan. 30, Señeres said that the "strike staged by some employees" on Monday was "illegal and unlawful." Señeres insisted that differences within an organization should be settled in a "peaceful and orderly manner." Therefore, employees intending to join another round of protests or similar actions "shall be dealt with severely."

"Holding a peaceful assembly might be legal, but the terms and conditions of employment taken up as subjects of a concerted action may not be legal," Señeres said in a memorandum, a copy of which was sent to the INQUIRER. "The appointment of a new director general is an issue that may not be subject of a concerted action, and is therefore illegal."

Unmoved, employees vowed to continue with their protests every day at 12 noon to 1 p.m. until Señeres steps down from his post.

On Friday, at least 105 employees from the main office of the NCC and 22 from the Mindanao office have signed a petition calling for Señeres' resignation.

Señeres, however, remained unmoved by all these cries for his ouster.

"Most of the accusations hurled against me are administrative in nature," Señeres told the INQUIRER during Thursday's forum between Uriarte and the DOST employees.

He said that the DOST, represented by Undersecretary Lirag has set up an oversight group to look into allegations made by some employees against him.

Señeres, however, has sent a letter to Montecastro, spokesperson of the Concerned Officers and Staff of NCC, asking her to explain why she should not be sanctioned for holding mass actions that led to work stoppage.

"I'm just asking her to explain her side. *Hindi pa 'yon* charge (that is not yet the charge)," Señeres told the INQUIRER in an interview.

NCC employees had asked then Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora in September 1999 for the ouster of Señeres, who was appointed by Joseph Estrada.

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Joann 912-5775

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

HOUSE & LOT

OTHER AREAS

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LOT

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Dame Elvira Baltazar Rufino

Sovereign Military Order of Malta
Pro Eclesia et Pontifice

February 5, 1912 – February 4, 2001

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on February 4, 2001
after having received the Viaticum.

Her loving husband **Ernesto D. Rufino** (✝); Children: **Ma. Consuelo** & **Oscar Lopez**, **Ma. Teresita** & **John Litton**, **Ma. Elvira** & **Emmanuel** (✝) **Ledesma**, **Ernesto, Jr.** & **Josefina Padilla**.

Grandchildren: **Cedie** & **Vincent Vargas**, **Cary** & **Yvette Lopez**, **Rina** & **Rudy Bautista**, **Piki** & **Monina Lopez**, **Pia** & **Raffy Abello**, **Bea** & **Eric Puno**, **Jay** & **Georgina Lopez**, **Angela** & **Dino Guingona**, **E.J.** & **Tess Litton**, **John** & **Marlou Litton**, **Mike Litton**, **Allan** & **Kathy Litton**, **Martin** & **Chris Litton**; **Ernesto Ledesma**, **Gina** & **Chris Lim**, **Liza** & **Quitos Bengzon**, **Rovy** & **Jaja Ledesma**, **Mandy Ledesma**; **Lyra** & **Manny Maceda**, **Ernie Rufino**, **Amby** & **Stephanie Rufino**, **Victor Rufino**, **Lui Rufino**, **Joysie Rufino**, **Ysabel Rufino**; and 41 Great grandchildren.

Sister **Victoria Pantangco**, Brother-in-law **Elias Pantangco** and sister-in-law **Julieta Abad Rufino**.

Her mortal remains lie in state at Capilla Dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park.

Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 7, 2001.

In lieu of flowers, donations to: Caritas Manila, White Cross, or Hospitaller Foundation of the Sovereign Order of Malta will be greatly appreciated.

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late JOSE Z. BAJARIAS was extrajudicially settled and adjudicated among his heirs executed and ratified before Atty. Nestor C. Rivera Notary Public as per Doc No. 536; Page No. 108; Book No. 30; Series of 2001 of his Notary Register.
(PDI-Feb. 5, 12 & 19,2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT

Public notice is hereby given of an extra-judicial settlement of the Estate of Espedito N. Pison executed by the sole heirs, namely: Concepcion A. Pison, Elizabeth P. Kotorman, Jose Edmundo A. Pison, Ma. Rose P. Lizares, Salud P. Villanueva and Catherine A. Pison, affecting personal properties. Instrument was ratified before Notary Public Jose Ma. Torres, as Doc. No. 437, Page No. 88, Book No. XXIII, Series of 1985.
(PDI – Feb. 5, 12 & 19, 2001)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late LEONARDO B. MANUEL who died in state on March 20 2000 in QC has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc #0258 Page #63 Book #CCCII Series of 2000 before Not Public Hector P. Reyes of Marikina.
(PDI-Feb. 5, 12 &19, 2001)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given of the Loss of Metro Stock Certificate No. A-0100 under the name of Mr. Justo Sy. If no one contest after one (1) year new certificate will be issued.
(PDI-Feb. 5, 12 &19, 2001)

PERSONAL

CIVIL WEDDING/SM 5280747

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
SAAC Bldg., UP Diliman Complex
Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

Impact Evaluation of the Philippine Human Rights Plan

The Bids and Awards Committee of the Commission on Human Rights announces its search of a qualified Consultancy Group to undertake an impact evaluation of the Philippine Human Rights Plant (PHRP).
The assessment shall determine the extent of implementation and results of the PHRP Specifically, it must:

- Identify legislative, administrative and programme measures formulated, adopted and implemented in response to human rights issues under the 16 identified sectors;
- Determine changes, if any, on human rights situations of the sectors concerned;
- Find out the nature and degree of coordination between and among participating government, non-government and people's organizations in implementing priority programmes in response to human rights issues;
- Identify factors which facilitate or hinder effective PHRP implementation, and
- Recommend areas for further improvement of the PHRP

A Pre-Qualification / Pre-Bid Meeting shall be held on February 12, 2001, Monday 9:30 a.m. at the CHR Conference Room, SAAC Bldg., UP Diliman Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. Interested bidders are required to submit the following Pre-Qualification / Pre-Bid Documents on the said date:

- Profile of the Consulting Group, to include specific areas of involvement in research and program evaluation (give specific work), work background, fields of specialization
- SEC registration and other appropriate licenses
- Income tax return for the last two years.

For details, contact the PHRP Secretariat (c/o Ms. Naylene Bautista) at nos. 927-6225 and 925-3878.

(Sgd.) COMM. JORGE R. COQUIA
Head, CHR Committee on Bids & Awards

(PDI -- Feb. 5, 6 & 7, 2001)

ANNOUNCEMENT

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(PDI - Feb 4 & 5 2001)

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IMF sending team to assess economy

By Clarissa S. Batino

A TEAM from the International Monetary Fund is arriving in the next two weeks to meet with the economic team of the Macapagal administration and discuss whether or not a post-program monitoring for the Philippines would be sealed.

Rafael Buenaventura, governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and chief negotiator with the IMF, said a monitoring program would likely be taken to win back the confidence of international investors and creditors at the soonest possible time.

Under the post-program monitoring, the IMF reviews the country's economic performance three times a year compared to a mere yearly consultation for countries without any IMF program.

The Philippines concluded its $1.4-billion loan program with the IMF last December but because of its failure to contain the budget deficit to P62.5 billion last year, the last installment of the loan was not released and the program was considered failed.

Buenaventura said the new administration would present its economic targets this year to the IMF.

The economic team has arrived at targets of 4 to 4.5 percent growth in gross national product, 2.8 to 4.3 percent expansion in gross domestic product, inflation rate of 6 to 7 percent, and a budget deficit target of P145 billion.

The budget gap remains the most crucial of these economic targets given the country's poor track record of having exceeded the deficit target in three successive years. Last year, the budget gap hit P136.1 billion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had revealed that this year's deficit could grow to as much as P225 billion. But Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin had said the government would strive to keep it down to P145 billion.

The inter-agency Development Budget Coordinating Council, Boncodin said, has agreed to cover part of the deficit by aggressively tapping the Official Development Assistance.

"One of the measures to cover the deficit is through ODA," said the budget chief who noted that ODA disbursements last year reached only $700 million as compared to an annual average of $1.2 billion.

Boncodin said the government would review the portfolio of foreign-assisted projects to facilitate the disbursement of ODA.

Aside from economic targets, the IMF is expected to follow up issues it considers crucial such as the passage of the power reform bill and the full privatization of Philippine National Bank.

The Macapagal administration is planning to shelve the power sector reform bill, a move that many fear could lead to a crisis in the electricity sector.

More companies expected to go public this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOLLOWING the ouster of President Estrada, more local companies are lining up for initial public offerings at the Philippine Stock Exchange this year to take advantage of improving investor appetite.

Only two months into the year 2001, there are four companies which have filed an application with the PSE for public listing while some are set to file within the first semester.

The four companies which have applied for IPOs were landbanking company First Centro Inc., real estate firm Primex Corp., information technology-related SQL Wizard Inc. and telecommunications firm Radio Marine Network (Smartnet) Inc., according to PSE records.

On the other hand, among those which are set to file include vehicle insurer Standard Insurance Co. Inc. and Centro Escolar University, both controlled by the Echauz family.

The PSE, for its part, is set to demutualize or convert itself into a stock corporation by Aug. 8 and might itself even pursue an IPO within the year.

Last year, there were only six companies which braved the battered equities market: Canadian insurer Sun Life Financial Inc., technology upstart Diversified Financial Network Inc., Subic-based electronics manufacturer Active Alliance Inc., powder coat manufacturer Corro-Coat Inc., Macondray Plastics Inc. and restaurant chain Pancake House Inc.

PSE president Ramon T. Garcia said: "I foresee now an uptrend as far as the market is concerned and new money is definitely coming in to the market. This proves what has been said that the market is the mirror of what's happening to the country and the economy."

"There has been renewed interest on new listings and we can expect more IPOs to take effect during the year," he said.

In the case of First Centro, which is owned by banker Bobby Guevara, the company is set to offer 270 million shares or 27 percent of total listed shares at a price of P1 to P2. Pentacapital Investment was tapped as the lead underwriter and issue manager.

Primex Corp., on the other hand, plans to offer 67 million secondary shares or 22 percent of listed shares at a price of P1.80 to P2.20. Underwriter will be the First Metro Investment Co.

SQL Wizard will offer four million shares or 20 percent of listed shares at P1.75 to raise P7 million with Pacific Asia Capital Corp. as the underwriter.

Meanwhile, Radio Marine will offer 225 million shares or 30 percent of listed shares at P1.10 per share. The underwriter will be the Philippine Regional Investment Development Corp.

Since the Asian financial crisis erupted in July 1997, only a few IPOs were seen in the market amid following the loss of investor confidence in the local economy. Philippine companies which pushed through with their IPOs decided to do them overseas such as the Nasdaq or the Singapore Stock Exchange instead of the local bourse.

Based on the PSE records, there were seven IPOs in 1997, three in 1998, four in 1999 and six in 2000.

IPOs for this year, however, are expected to exceed those seen during these past few years.

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BUSINESS *Monday*

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

'Straight ruler' put to test at BIR

BY MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO

A COLLEAGUE once described incoming BIR Commissioner Rene G. Bañez as "straighter than a ruler."

Perhaps it was for this reason that PLDT head Manuel V. Pangilinan handpicked him to head the telecommunications giant's procurement department, an area where irregularities were uncovered in the past.

Bañez's "straightness" will be put to a test when he sits at the helm of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the government's biggest source of funds and also one of the largest nesting grounds for graft and corruption in the country.

But the signs point to Bañez's ability to stand above the dirt his new agency is

STRAIGHT/ C2

JOHNNY VILLENA

COLLEAGUES describe Rene Bañez as straighter than a ruler. Will he be able to clean up one of the country's most corrupt agencies?

Slowdown, yes, but recession?

NEW YORK—You can understand why the latest consumer confidence index plunged like an unopened parachute if you just recap some of the big news over the past few months.

Most of it was negative.

It wasn't just the events, such as the billions of dollars lost on stocks, threats of inflation, warnings about recession, massive layoffs and the zapping of the most extreme high-tech hopes. They were bad enough.

Adding to the impact, however, were the preceding 10 years of easy times when little in the business and economic area wasn't just good—but very, very good. That left people psychologically vulnerable to bad news.

Was the decline in consumer confidence an overreaction?

Maybe, but for now it can't be determined one way or another.

American consumers don't always signal mood changes clearly as indicators suggest. They aren't automatons. They think, they reason, they wait and see.

Uncertainty, if that is what they are expressing, is a well-reasoned response to a period of economic flux, and as the economic signals become clearer so will the mind of the American consumer.

It takes time to digest the significance of, for example, the news about massive layoffs among large companies and the realization that despite such things, the jobless rate remains at all-time lows.

And if their personally chosen stocks sailed higher than the averages before plunging, it is only understandable that they should begin to doubt themselves, lower their expectations and maybe seek help.

A lot of them have done just that. They didn't simply abandon stocks altogether during the great plunge in averages. Much of their remaining money went into mutual funds, a record $309 billion worth last year.

That was last year, but now The Wall Street Journal reports there are indications the flow of money into mutual funds is continuing, suggesting that even after a horrible 2000 they remain committed to investing.

While the situation still might change, you can hardly read fear into the latest housing statistics. They show a sudden, spectacular rise in home purchases, the biggest monthly gain in more than seven years.

A home, as every buyer and potential buyer is aware, generally represents the biggest financial commitment of a consumer's life, the sort of action nobody is inclined to make if they've given up on the economy.

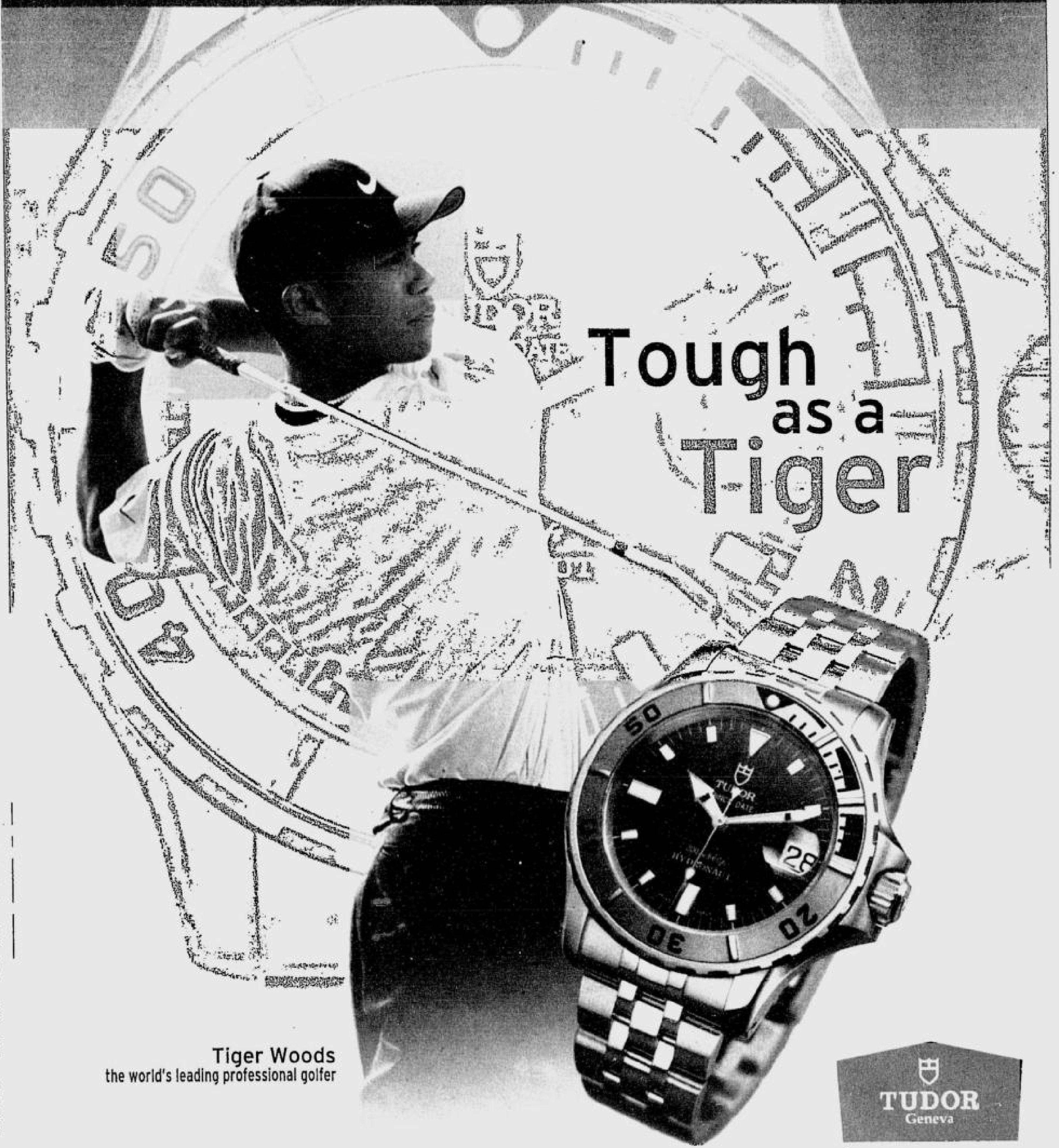
There is little question that slowdowns hurt, and this slowdown has already inflicted real pain in some heavy industrial centers and high-tech areas. A slowdown, however, is no surprise. It was to be expected.

American producers made an extreme effort for a decade, longer than any other period this century, flooding this country and others with an unprecedented supply of stuff from toys to automobiles, straining all the devices of marketing and advertising to do so.

A slowdown from such a rugged pace means an adjustment, but the plunging consumer confidence index of The Conference Board still leaves it at the same level as in 1996, when such a level was viewed as very high.

The consumer has sent a message, but it isn't necessarily about a recession.

Perhaps it just indicates a reasonable, defensive economic position, an intelligent hiatus to see how low the Fed will push interest rates—it chopped it another half point on Wednesday—and if, when and by how much the White House and Congress might cut taxes. *AP*



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MAPping THE FUTURE

Oscar M. Lopez

FIRST OF all, I would like to add my congratulations to the new president of MAP, Ricardo Pascua and to the new board of directors. I would also like to thank the previous president Johnny Santos and his board for having chosen me as Management Man of the Year 2000. I also congratulate them in their achievements for the year 2000, which included taking a strong stand on matters of national interest.

Scarcely more than a year ago, I came before you to accept the Special Award for Management Excellence that you posthumously conferred on my brother, Geny.

Today, I come before you again, this time to accept the Management Man of the Year award that you have chosen to bestow upon me. It is a single, if unexpected, honor for which I am very grateful, because nothing is more significant and appreciated as an award that comes from one's peers.

When I took over the leadership of the Lopez Group upon the untimely death of my brother Geny just a little over a year and a half ago, I knew that nothing less than an award-winning performance was expected of me. But frankly, I didn't expect to be given this coveted and prestigious award so soon.

But I presume the award you are giving me today is as much a statement of faith in the enduring accomplishment of the Lopez Group as it is a personal recognition of what I might have done as a management professional.

I would like to accept this award therefore, not just for myself but on behalf of all the other Lopez entrepreneurs and professional managers responsible for making our group of companies what it is today. Let me call out some of their names, and I would like them to stand up and be recognized: my brother Manolo, president of Meralco and now vice chair of the Lopez Group; my sister Presy and her husband, Steve Psinakis.

Presy is president of Sierra Tours and director of many of our corporations; while Steve is senior adviser to the Lopez Group; my nephew Gabby Lopez, who is chair of ABS-CBN that did a tremendous job in covering the impeachment trial and the Edsa II Revolution and head of our communication sector. There are also many other budding entrepreneurs and managers among the third-generation Lopezes. Can I ask all of them to stand up as a group and be recognized?

Among our top professional managers are: Peter Garrucho, our managing director for the energy sector and a former president of this Management Association of the Philippines; Freddie Garcia, president of ABS-CBN, our top earner in the Group; Chris Monsod, our chief strategist for the Group; Nestor "Tong" Padilla, president of our very successful Rockwell Center; Raffy Alunan, president of Maynilad Water System; Jose "Ping" de Jesus, president of our Manila North Tollways project; Eckie Gonzales, our top investment officer of the Group; Nonoy Ibañez, president of First Philippine Holdings Corp. and now concurrently my chief of staff.

But after my father's death and after the Edsa Revolution, much of the credit for the tremendous growth of the Lopez Group must go to my late brother Geny, who was our *"primus inter pares,"* who provided the leadership to make the Lopez Group grow in size and scope way beyond where it was before martial law.

Behind the brothers was, of course, my father, the founder of our group of companies. But for the sake of historical accuracy, it must be pointed out that before my father's time there were at least three more generations of Lopez entrepreneurs who helped shape the entrepreneurial culture of the Lopez clan.

Ours is therefore a Filipino entrepreneurial family whose roots go back not to Spain nor to China but right here in the Philippines to a small town called Jaro in the province of Iloilo, Panay Island.

Within the historical context up to the mid-19th century, the Lopezes of Jaro were mainly engaged in the native textile industry and in trading. But with the opening of Philippine ports to world trade in the mid-1850s, the native textile industry suffered a disastrous decline since it could no longer compete with the cheap mass produced clothing materials from the mechanized factories of Manchester, England.

This was probably our first taste of the severe impact of globalization on our country and in order to cope with its consequences, the Lopez family was forced to refocus its attention on a new industry—sugar production for the export market. The family was able to take advantage of the world sugar boom in the latter half of the 19th century. By the early 1930s, the extended Lopez family had accumulated more than 5,000 hectares of sugarland and established three centrifugal sugar mills in the two provinces of Negros Occidental and Iloilo.

It was at this point that my father, who was fresh from graduate studies at Harvard Law School and newly married, and his brother Fernando decided to shift the family business from agriculture to industry. This was a momentous decision in the history of the Lopez family business.

A distinctive aspect of the business relationship between the two brothers, which was formalized in a co-ownership agreement on June 12, 1928, was that whatever one brother owned was always split equally with the other.

In a development unusual for a family corporation, the two brothers never argued about money, a legacy that this present generation of Lopezes is trying to emulate.

When you follow the course of the Lopez family business during the 70 years—from 1928 to the present time, you realize that there were many peaks and valleys in that business, and twice in its history the family lost practically everything—the first time was during World War II, when all the airplanes, buses, ferry boats, printing presses which constituted the hard assets of the Lopez transportation and newspaper businesses developed in the 1930s were completely destroyed during the of war.

The second time was during martial law, when most of our businesses such as ABS-CBN, Manila Chronicle, Meralco and its holding company, Meralco Securities Corp. now called First Philippine Holdings Corp., were either shut down or taken over by the government or the cronies of the Marcoses, mainly due to the strong stand which my father and his newspaper, the Manila Chronicle, took against the graft and corruption of the Marcos regime.

And yet, after each major debacle, the family business managed to come back bigger and stronger than ever.

In fact, a two-volume book on the saga of the Lopez family from 1800 to 2000 entitled "Phoenix" and authored by Raul Rodrigo has just been published. The word "Phoenix" refers to that mythical bird that has the ability to rise from the ashes to go on to greater glory than before.

I do not mean to suggest that I expect us to be burned to cinders anytime soon. But given the current condition in the country, the entire local business sector may in fact be in the process of undergoing this severe test.

Only those that are so organized so as to survive such a test are expected to come out of this strengthened by the experience. And who are those companies? Those are the companies which are, as the title of a best-selling business book puts it, built to last.

The executives of the Lopez Group know that I practically use this book entitled, "Built to Last" by James Collins and Jerry Porras, as a kind of bible to benchmark our companies with the successful habits of visionary companies mentioned in the book like GE, IBM and Sony.

I was so attracted to this book because I thought, or would like to believe, that the reason the Lopez Group has been so resilient through two centuries of its history but especially in the past 70 years, is because we do have the kind of corporate values that go beyond the mere earning of profits.

Put another way, war and its devastation, Marcos and martial law, and impeachment trial will come and go, but the Lopez Group will live on because it believes in certain basic values and principles that guide its existence beyond mere bottomline results.

Do not get me wrong, profits are always important because they enable us to do what we are doing. But as my late brother Geny loves to tell everyone, "render public service to our people, to our customers and the profits are guaranteed to follow."

I am sure any survey of the Lopez Group, especially among the senior ranks of its executives, will come out with the conclusion that they are with us not just because of the pay and the benefits. They are with us because they feel they are part of a group out to create, in the words of Collins and Porras, something bigger and more lasting than themselves, something enduring, a great company.

At the core of all these, is what Collins and Porras describes as a set of timeless core values. Forty years ago, this made possible the takeover of Meralco by a group of Filipino entrepreneurs and managers led by my father who firmly believed in the ability of Filipinos to run this large and complex company as well as its previous American owners and managers. And we did.

Martial law brought us down but we had the confidence that enabled us the second-generation Lopezes to build up the business again because of these values.

The test of the true and effective manager of a company that is built to last starts when the questions "what do we stand for" and "why do we exist" are asked.

I would like to take this occasion to reaffirm our commitment to the core values that have sustained us through many difficult times in the past.

First and foremost is our commitment to family and corporate unity. In essence this means that the family must, relative to its businesses, move as one and with one voice. We also maintain certain rituals aimed at continually communicating and building consensus within the family.

Corporate unity is nurtured in much the same fashion as we nurture family unity. Hence there are rituals to be observed, geared toward promoting consensus-building across the Group. In both Benpres and First Holdings, I hold biweekly meetings of chief executives and operating officers.

At least once a year, usually during budget time, we hold a more formal forum for all CEOs and operating officers of all the Lopez companies and affiliates, to inform each other of how we did the previous year and what we expect to do the coming year.

Our second most important core value is our commitment to our employees. My father said it well in a speech to Meralco employees: "Human values are above and far superior to material values . . . Our success should be measured not by the wealth we can accumulate, but by the amount of happiness we can spread to our employees."

But his most quotable quote was "In case of doubt in a controversy arising between labor and management, the doubt must always be resolved in favor of labor."

By living up to this principle, he never had any strikes in any of his companies. And our companies continue to live and abide by this principle.

Our third core value is public service. A passion for public service in effect is the core ideology that drives the Lopez group. My late brother Geny articulated public service as business philosophy in a speech he prepared but which I delivered here at the MAP meeting in August of 1997. He said: "Our reason for being in business is to render public service. Public service—doing well by doing good . . . . Profits are not the only reason we go to work each day. There is the fulfillment of being able to give back value to others who deserve the best for their money."

Our fourth core value which my father constantly stressed is education and the concept of continuous learning and improvement in our companies. My father firmly believed that young talent must be nurtured by the best education possible, perhaps because as a young man, he went to the best schools here and abroad (Ateneo, UP School of Law, and Harvard). He also saw to it that Geny and I went to Ateneo and Harvard.

Later on, he sought to provide other young Filipinos the opportunity for a Harvard-quality business education by donating the edifice of the Asian Institute of Management here in Manila.

We, his children, have decided to institutionalize this learning process within our group of companies by establishing the Eugenio Lopez Development Center in the hills of Antipolo in 1997 in what was originally to be my father's retirement mansion.

This Center is dedicated to the continuing professionalization of our management staff.

At this point I would like to digress briefly from my topic to talk about current events, because we businessmen do not operate in a vacuum. Today, the biggest challenge is what happens after Edsa II.

The lesson of Edsa II is that people, especially the young, are sick and tired of corruption and moral turpitude in government. The impeachment hearing confirmed their worst fears about shenanigans in high places and impelled them to take a direct hand in effecting change. The trial enabled us to see more clearly that morality in government is directly related to our country's economic health.

As the Dean of the UP School of Economics, Prof. Raul Fabella, observed in a recent paper, "without the rule of law and the institution of morality, there is no decent and civilized life, let alone a market economy."

The Swedish economist, Gunnar Myrdal, long ago talked about the "soft state" a description that fits many de-

BUILT/ C4

'Straight ruler' . . .

(From page C1)

known for. He is quite comfortable financially—he recently moved to plush Ayala Alabang, whose neighbors include former President Fidel V. Ramos, Philamlife president Jose L. Cuisia, and even popular actor Aga Muhlach.

He also has a fleet of expensive vehicles which include the latest Mercedes Benz model, an HRV, a Pajero and a Land Cruiser.

Bañez is not new at the BIR. He served as deputy commissioner under then BIR head Liwayway Vinzons Chato from June 1993 until November 1995.

He is a law graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University and spent more than 10 years at the Joaquin Cunanan and Co./ Price Waterhouse Coopers (Phils.) where he was last assigned as tax principal.

He was also a professor of tax law at the Ateneo for eight years before going on a sabbatical two years ago. Teaching will remain on the shelf with his new post.

As of this interview, Bañez is enjoying good pay and perks as SVP for support services and tax of the Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co.

When asked how PLDT president Manny Pangilinan reacted to the news, Bañez says the reply was: "I don't want to lose you but duty calls so I cannot do anything. I will support you all the way."

Bañez says it was a hard decision for him to make accepting the post because of personal concerns. "It was a very difficult decision. You see I am family-oriented. I have two teenagers—one is 17, the other is 13. Even my children don't like it."

He says his daughter told him, "I don't like it but I have no choice but to support you all the way. I hope you make a difference."

Unlike most top executives, Bañez involves himself in raising his children, together with his wife, a doctor by profession. He knows that accepting the BIR post means spending less time with his family.

"As head of an agency, there is more pressure than before. At the end of the day, everything stops with you."

So what finally changed his mind?

"What happened in Edsa I think was a miracle. But I told myself that it should be the last Edsa. There should be no more Edsa and hopefully I can do something to avoid that from happening," he says. "I want to do this for the children and the youth."

But those thoughts were not the only ones responsible for making Bañez decide. He consulted with no less than the Archbishop of Manila Jaime Cardinal Sin and Makati Bishop Crisostomo Yalong.

Sin, whom he is close to because of some charity work Bañez is involved in, immediately told him, "Do not worry about your personal concern. I will take care of that. I will pray for you."

Yalong's advice was for Bañez to find an answer to his personal concerns before making a decision. He went to Yalong twice before accepting the post.

"There is a purpose to our existence at the end of the day. When I finally made my decision to accept I was peaceful. I am OK."

BAÑEZ JOHNNY VILLENA

Asked about his thoughts on the BIR and the tax system in general, he replies, "My thrust is to restore the trust of the taxpaying public."

"The BIR should be taxpayer-friendly. Right now, when a taxpayer has a problem, instead of getting help he gets scared off," Bañez says.

"We can be hard but still gentle and not arrogant; firm but still reasonable and not threatening," he adds.

He says he wants substantial consultation with the business sector, a review of the tax system, a look at the tax processes, manpower and structure.

"When you look at the tax system you have to revisit the Philippine tax system—is it good for the Philippines? The tax system should be developmental," he adds.

He cites the housing problem as an example. "And yet there is no provision in the code to help people who have no houses. Housing loan interests should be tax deductible," he says.

He says he also wants the tax laws to be more attuned to the needs of small businesses. "We need to guide them in becoming good business players."

"The BIR should be responsive to the needs of government and the agency should have the flexibility to respond to the needs of the government."

He says the tax system must take into consideration cultural, sociological factors and the background of the Filipinos.

As the new BIR chief, Bañez is tasked to raise some P300 billion in tax revenues this year.

"I will need the support of the BIR and the taxpayers to do this. I will try very hard," he says.

He makes a very valid observation with regard to raising revenues. "You can only do so much revenue-raising. You should also visit how government spends and the prioritization of its projects," he says.

Bañez intends to pursue the computerization of BIR as the use of technology has been proven to be very successful in other countries.

Bañez is the choice of Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo. He was also in the shortlist submitted by the Search Committee formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look for the right persons for various government posts.

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Businessmen cautiously optimistic about recovery

BY TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

NOW that the dust has settled and the euphoria of the controversial People Power II is giving way to a bite of reality, the business sector is still optimistic about the country's economic prospects. Business leaders surveyed by Business Monday, however, are quick to add that something needs to be done—and fast—to make up for over two years of wallowing in the doldrums. In the meantime they remain optimistic, perhaps cautiously, but optimistic nonetheless.

Jerry Isla
Deputy senior partner
Joaquin Cunanan & Co.

"I am more optimistic about our prospects but I don't think we can show a recovery in the first quarter, it is practically over. But we may start seeing improvements in the second quarter. It will all depend on foreign investors."

"The peso and the stock market may be improving but it will not be significant without the money coming in from abroad. We still cannot provide more jobs. But despite all these, I am more upbeat."

J. Xavier Gonzales
President
Benpres Holdings Corp.

"People are more optimistic definitely but a lot still needs to be done especially in terms of getting investors to come in. As we can see, there is a lot of skepticism abroad about what happened here."

"We should be able to show them that something institutional changed here. The important thing now is to show them that something has changed. We should remove that skepticism."

Oscar C. de Venecia
Chair of the board
Basic Consolidated Inc.

"I am really very bullish about our prospects now because suddenly I am receiving a lot of inquiries from foreign investors who are now thinking of coming back to the country. Before they were afraid to come in because of the perception that there is no level playing field."

"I am sure that a lot of other foreign investors are ready to come in now that there is a new government."

Peter Wallace
President
EIU Philippines Inc.

"I think the criticisms against President (Macapagal) Arroyo at this early stage are a little bit unfair. Perhaps there are some questionable appointments but she has only been in power for several days. We should give her time."

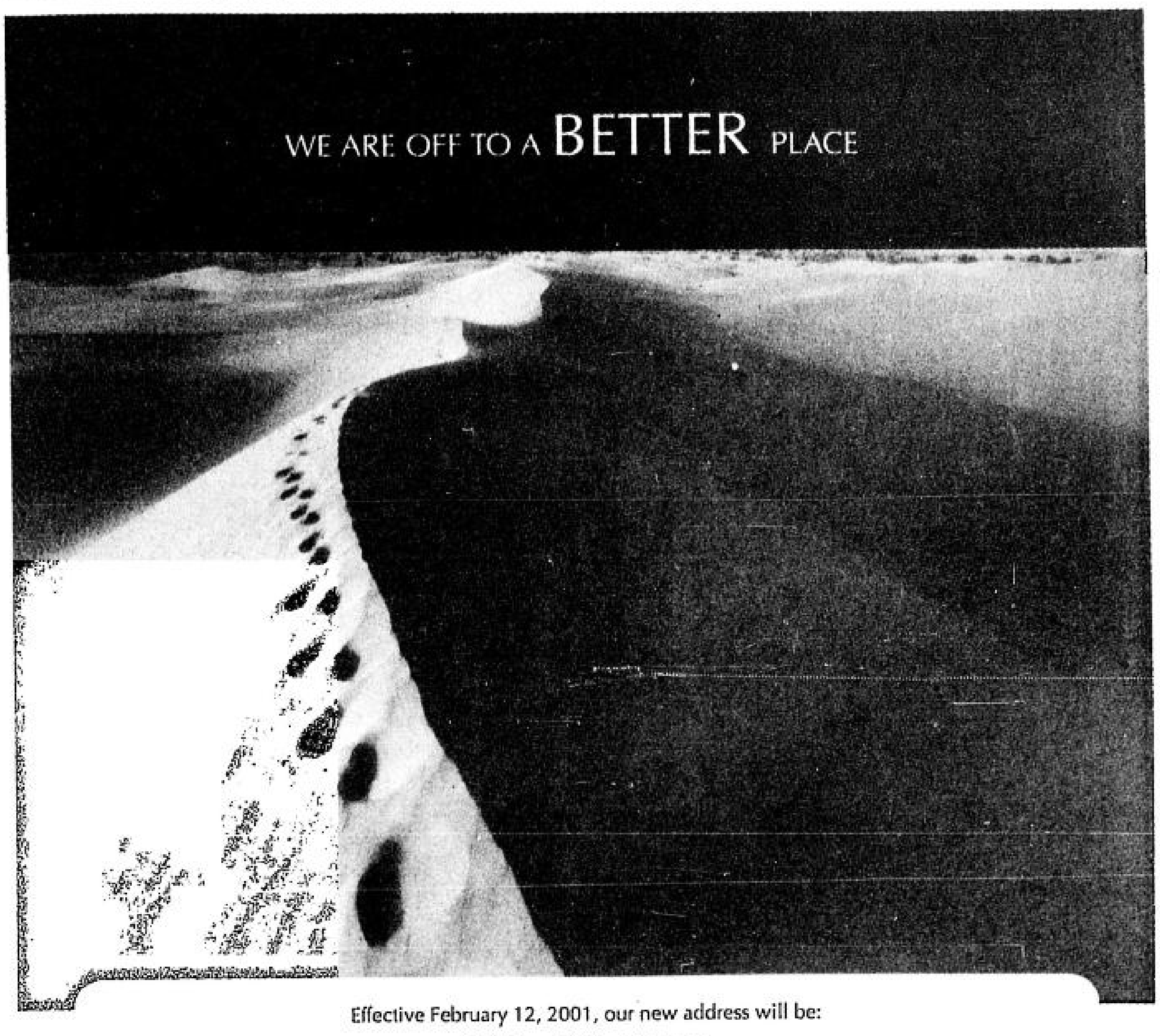
"I think the euphoria surrounding the revolution created expectations that are too high. We should wait a little before we evaluate the President and what she is doing. We should give her the benefit of the doubt."

"For the business sector, there is a change in business perception from a sense of despondency to a mood of relief. People now are no longer frustrated but it is important that the entire society must change somehow."

Ricardo Pascua
President
Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.

"The business sector was in a stage of suspended animation. What we learned from Edsa II is that business should make a stand, it should always make its voice heard in matters of national interest."

"For this year, the Management Association of the Philippines has selected good governance as the theme for the projects and programs. We believe that for us to survive, we should improve corporate governance or else we will be accused of seeing mistakes in others but not in ours."



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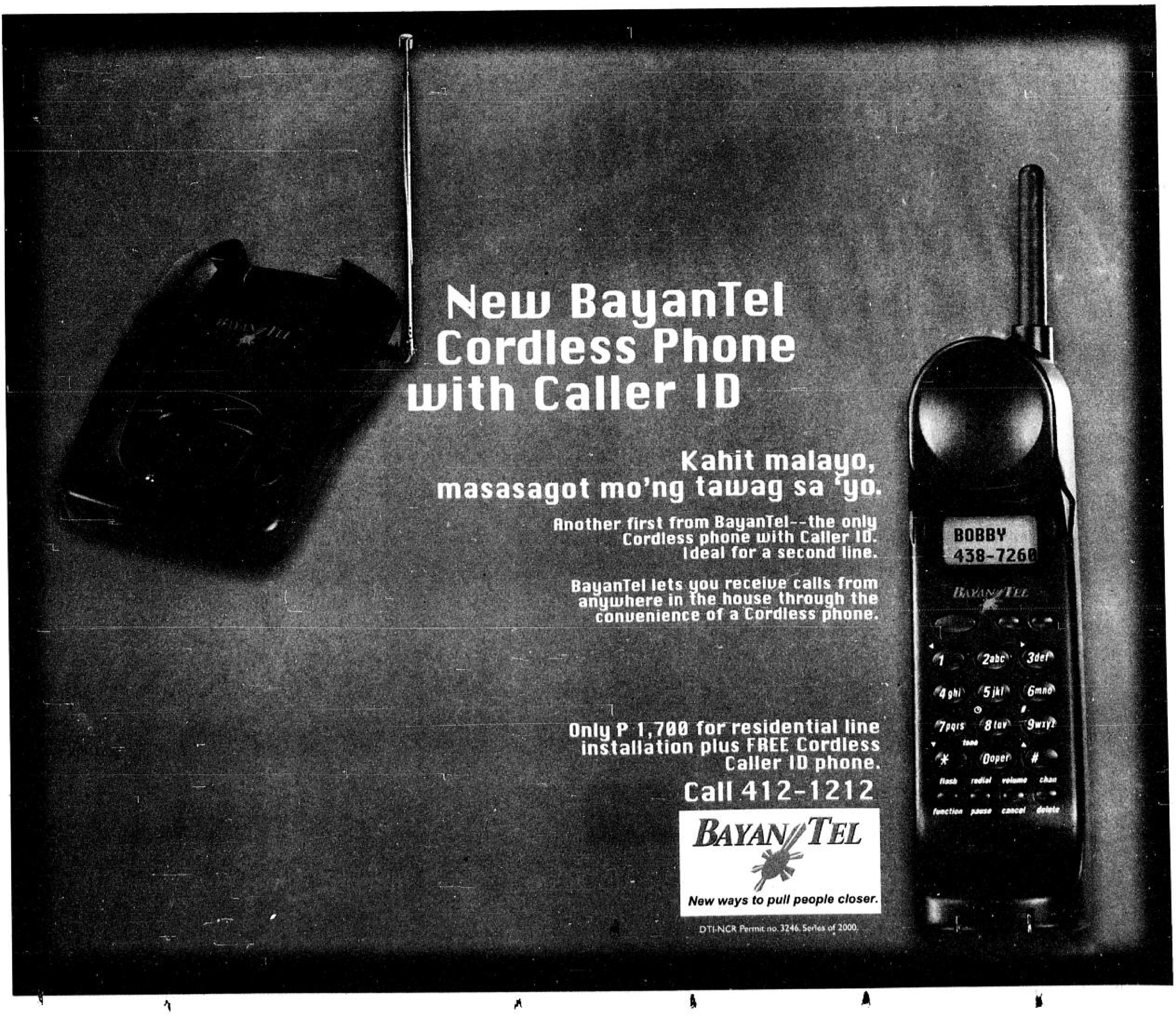

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Internet becoming major challenge for CEOs

NEW YORK—The impact of the Internet has become a major challenge for CEOs around the world, according to a far-reaching study by Accenture (formerly Andersen Consulting) and The Conference Board. The study reveals that the percentage of CEOs concerned about the impact of the Internet more than doubled from last year.

The study, "The CEO Challenge: Top Marketplace and Management Issues 2001," is the most comprehensive survey of CEOs ever conducted by The Conference Board in its 85-year history, covering the views of 506 CEOs in North America, Europe and Asia. The executives were asked to select the top three "marketplace" and top three "management" challenges for their companies in the next year—with "marketplace" and "management" challenges defined as the leading external and internal forces, respectively, posing the greatest concern to their business.

Of the top three marketplace challenges for 2001—"Changes in type/level of competition" (41 percent of CEOs surveyed), "Impact of the Internet" (38 percent), and "Industry consolidation" (37 percent)—only the "Impact of the Internet" was not among the top three in last year's survey, jumping from eighth place last year to second place this year.

"The study clearly underscores the importance of technology and the Internet to business leaders around the world, especially among successfully established 'old economy' companies," said Richard Cavanagh, president and CEO of The Conference Board. "The Internet, which only six months ago was the principal promise of emerging 'dot-coms' and the fascination of Wall Street, has become the practical technological lever for large and mid-sized competitors.

"Grown-up companies have taken back the keys to the car. As the Internet makes pricing more transparent, as customers demand faster service at lower costs, and as Internet competition intensifies, it is not surprising that the Internet is the concern that has risen dramatically for CEOs and is now ranked the second major issue globally."

While the Internet showed the greatest gain from last year's survey among marketplace challenges,

INTERNET/ C5

Built ...

(From page C2)

veloping countries like ours, where there is rampant buying and selling of rules and enforcement.

In a soft state, the principal source of wealth is not created value but extracted value based on power over rules and enforcement, the usual results being are bad infrastructure, poor revenue collection, higher cost of doing business, poor investment allocation, and slow economic growth.

Clearly, we have to change if we are to prosper, and it is significant that our new President, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, has recognized Edsa 2 as primarily a moral revolution. If so, then we have to follow through the logic of that moral revolution.

Edsa I

It has been pointed out, and rightfully so, that if Edsa 2 happened, it is because Edsa I failed to achieve its main purpose. And Edsa I failed because the main culprits were allowed to leave the country and go unpunished, and that no new moral order ensued from Edsa I.

Will all this happen again in Edsa 2? We hope not but President Macapagal-Arroyo must realize that she was put in power by the people, not to conduct government and business as usual, such as the distribution of spoils of office to political allies, but to create the conditions to make the moral revolution possible, which includes first and foremost throwing all the rascals in jail, and then recasting the bureaucracy to reflect a system based on merit rather than political patronage and creating a much more efficient tax collection system that will at the same time go after the big tax evaders.

Edsa 3

Unless all these things and more are done, Edsa 3 may not be too far behind Edsa 2.

End of my Sermon on the Mount!

Finally, in the spirit of the times, I view and accept this award as a reminder to those of us in the practice of management that we must put our businesses in the service of the Filipino, first and foremost, assured that no good deed ever goes unrewarded by a grateful people.

(This reflects the personal opinion of the author who is chair and chief executive officer of the Lopez Group of Companies. This contains the speech delivered by the author when the "Management Man of the Year" Award for 2000 was conferred on him by the Management Association of the Philippines at the MAP inaugural meeting on Jan. 29, 2001. The MAP secretariat and the author may be reached at mapsec@globe.com.)

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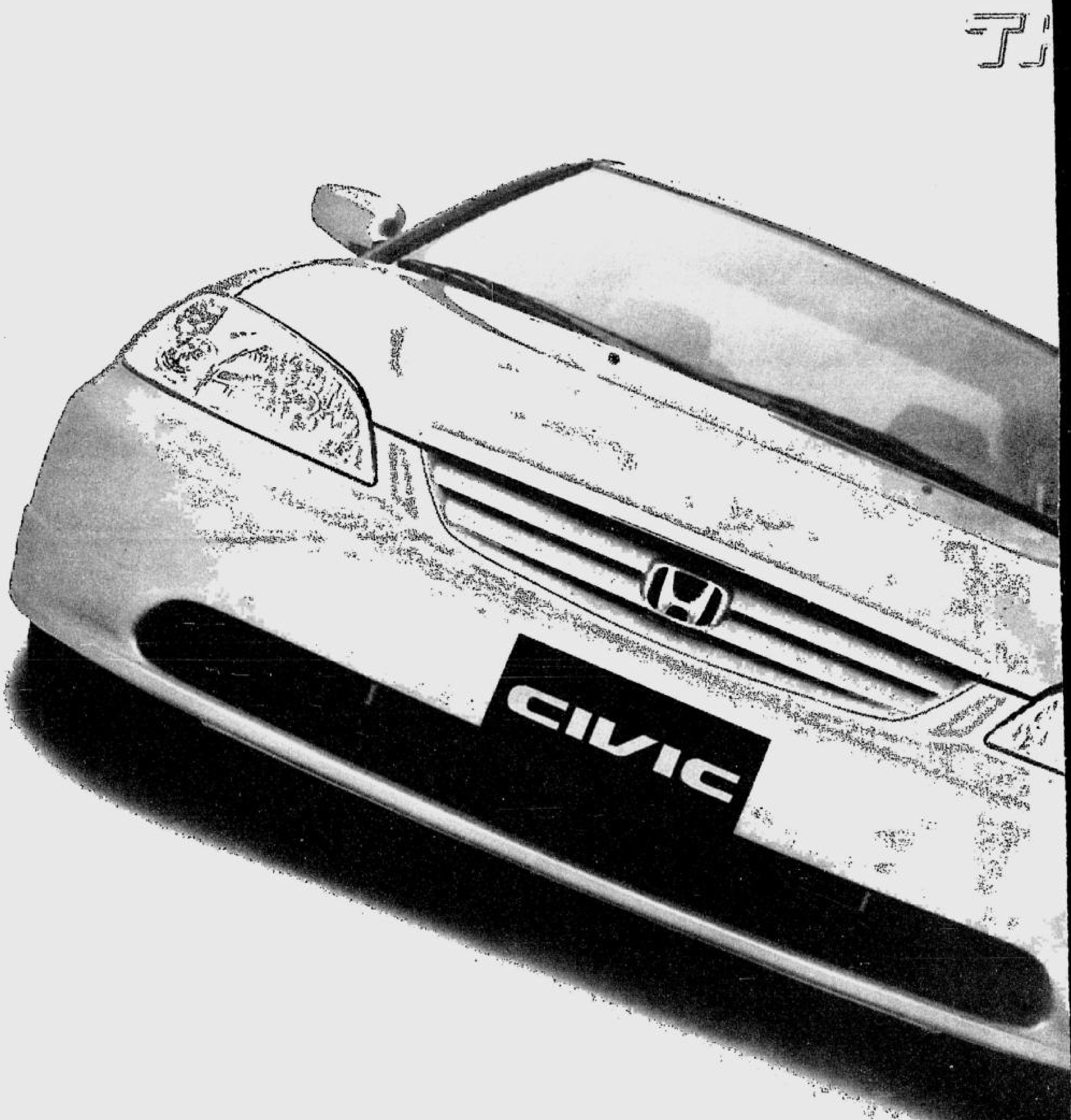

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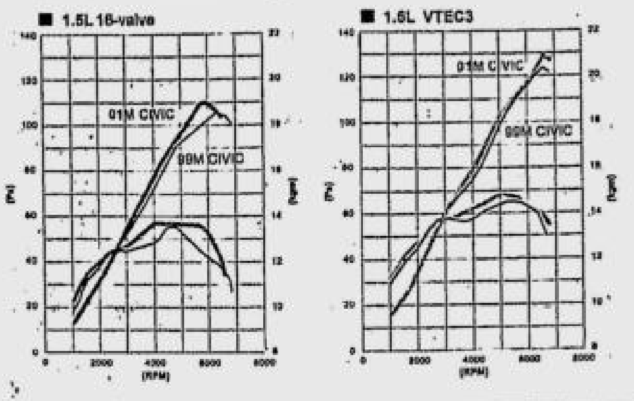

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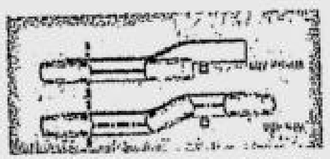

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Internet becoming major challenge for CEOs

(From page C4)

the jump appears to be due to IT users, not providers. In fact, fewer technology CEOs rated the "Impact of the Internet" as a top concern this year than did last year. Rather, the study revealed that CEOs of trade companies, utilities, healthcare and other non-tech industries were far more likely this year than last year to view the Internet as a top marketplace challenge. Moreover, it is larger firms with sales volumes of more that $5 billion, not only Internet startups, that are embracing the Internet as critical to their success.

"We're just halfway there in terms of realizing the full potential of digital technologies to transform industry and commerce," said Tom Pike, Accenture's managing partner for growth and strategy.

"The early lead of technology firms has paved the way for innovative business models on the part of trade and services companies. Similarly, the early lead of the 'dotcoms' has given way to a major comeback on the part of mature enterprises. We've seen only the beginning of the inter-enterprise efficiencies and customer relationships that are afforded them via the Internet. We'll certainly continue to see some bumps in the road ahead, but those who stay focused on innovative applications of new technologies to solve business problems will win big," he said.

Among the survey's other key findings:

Customer loyalty is the most critical management issue. Thirty-seven percent of CEOs surveyed ranked "Customer loyalty/retention" as one of the top three management issues. Customer loyalty has been the No. 1 concern for CEOs in the United States for two years running and is now a major issue in Europe. By stark contrast, customer loyalty is not a major concern in Japan—dropping from seventh place among CEOs in Japan in last year's survey to 10th place this year.

Flexibility and speed is another top management concern. Ranking close behind customer loyalty as a top management worry is the "Increasing flexibility and speed" (34 percent of CEOs surveyed).

This has been a top management concern for European CEOs for the past two years, and it is now a rising concern in North America and Japan, as well. Technology, catalyzed by the Internet, is accelerating efforts to create business value. Savvy CEOs around the globe realize that survival may well depend on their ability to adjust quickly to sudden marketplace shifts, especially as the long economic expansion begins to wane.

CEOs' views differ dramatically by region. The study shows differences among CEOs depending on where their companies are headquartered. Whereas North American CEOs said their No. 1 marketplace challenge is "Shortages of key skills" (up from 5th place last year), CEOs in Europe said their greatest marketplace challenge is the "Impact of the Internet." The leading concern for CEOs in Japan, by contrast, continues to be "Changes in type/level of competition."

Industry consolidation is a persistent concern. For the second year in a row, "Industry consolidation" ranked third among marketplace challenges that CEOs face. Mergers and acquisitions account for a rising proportion of CEOs' time and resources, the study found. Many mid-sized firms say they have fallen out of favor with investors and believe they must now acquire, or be acquired, in order to avoid being marginalized. One survey respondent, the CEO of a leading US telecommunications firm, said, ". . . About 50 percent of our customers have been bought out in the last four years. Our second-largest customer was bought out twice."

Price pressures are still an issue. Although "Downward pressure on your prices" no longer holds the No. 1 ranking among marketplace challenges, 33 percent of the CEO respondents said that it is still an important concern, ranking fourth among all the CEOs surveyed. And pricing pressures could well be exacerbated in the face of growing fears about a severe economic slowdown.

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MESSAGES

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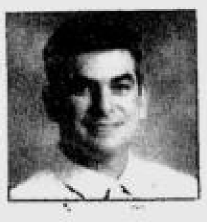
Congratulations to FGU for taking the first step in elevating the nonlife insurance industry to new heights with the launching of *fguonline.com*. This trailblazing step is truly commendable and once again sets the standard for other nonlife insurance companies to follow. By making its products and services available online, FGU successfully utilizes technology to bring unparalleled convenience to consumers and introduces a new level of efficiency for its business partners.

Mabuhay and congratulations to FGU!

Eduardo T. Malinis
Insurance Commissioner



We in the Ayala Group of Companies believe that in order to thrive in the global economy, we need to harness the power of technology and learn to compete and win in this new arena of e-commerce. The launch of *fguonline.com* is just part of a relentless effort to bring our products and services close to the Filipino customer. I wish to congratulate FGU for bringing this conviction closer to reality.

Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II
President, Ayala Corporation

Entering the new economy with its transactional website, FGU transcends many of the barriers existing in the old economy. Turnaround time is accelerated and information is obtained in real time for specific services, all of which add to better customer service and convenience. The launching of *fguonline.com* is a new milestone in the insurance industry, but it is just the first step, As FGU copes with the dynamics of the networked economy, it will add more services to this website in the near future. As this happens, shopping for non-life insurance coverage will truly be possible without having to leave the comfort of your home..

Xavier P. Loinaz
President, Bank of the Philippine Islands

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the hardworking people behind the successful launching of *fguonline.com*. While it may be true that its launching is an industry innovation and a trailblazing step, we must also look at this as an opportunity to deliver a new level of service and better value to the customers who continue to inspire our success. More than anything else, the launching of *fguonline.com* should serve as a challenge for us to utilize new technologies, while preserving the tradition of excellence and integrity that our customers and business partners truly deserve.

A. L. Salcedo Jr.

Alfonso L. Salcedo, Jr.
President, Ayala Insurance Companies

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fguonline.com: The secure and fully automated way to purchase your car insurance online

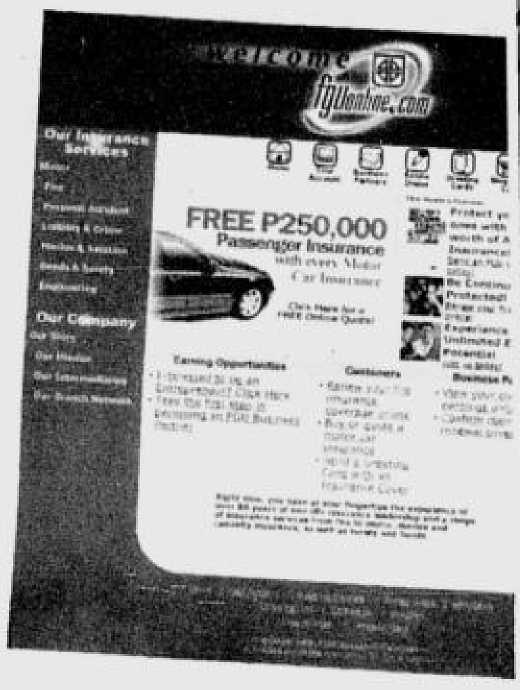
Time was when getting a motor car insurance was a tedious process. For one thing, having to go through and understand voluminous pages of insurance technicalities was just too much for comfort.

Fortunately, the dawning of the Internet made it possible to purchase a motor car insurance online. But how sure are you that your transaction is totally secure when other non-life insurance websites require you to log in your credit card number through another Internet portal? Doesn't sound too safe and convenient, right?

Now, there's a breakthrough website that lets Filipino consumers avail of car insurance and other non-life insurance services online the absolutely secure and convenient way!

fguonline.com from FGU Insurance Corporation, one of the country's largest non-life insurance companies, is the first fully transactional, fully automated and secure website designed to provide Filipinos with superior insurance services. Another industry standard, the website sets a new level of service and efficiency to the company's customers and business partners.

Ayala Insurance Companies President Alfonso L. Salcedo Jr. says: "The launching of *fguonline.com* confirms our belief that technology must be utilized in order to deliver the best benefit to consumers. We are very excited and at the same time, challenged by this milestone because it is a new channel through which we can communicate and deliver our services to the people who have consistently inspired our success."



The website, *www.fguonline.com*, is especially designed to eventually address all the needs of consumers, FGU business partners, and aspiring entrepreneurs. It features complete information on FGU's line-up of quality non-life insurance products, such as motor insurance, fire insurance, personal accident, liability and crime, marine and aviation, bonds and engineering, which can be easily accessed at the click of a mouse.

Each page provides an easy-to-follow, user-friendly question-and-answer format and also gives surfers a glimpse into the company's proud history, its mission, intermediaries and branch networks.

Enjoy superior convenience anytime, anywhere

For the first time, local consumers can apply, get quotations, and actually pay for an FGU car insurance over the Internet, simply by accessing *fguonline.com*. They can also pay their premiums over the Internet using their credit cards and get confirmation of their payments instantly!

Totally secure, fully automated!

Of course, FGU Insurance Corporation knows that security is a primary concern of all online consumers. That is why *fguonline.com* is the only insurance website in the country with VeriSign, a feature that protects a client's confidential information by encryption. VeriSign is the world's largest Internet trust services provider that supports businesses and consumers from the moment they establish an Internet presence through the entire life cycle of e-commerce activities. With VeriSign, *fguonline.com* allows business partners and clients to use the website with complete confidence --- you don't have to lose sleep thinking whether your transactions are safe and secure!

Plus with VeriSign at *fguonline.com*, customers don't have to enter other Internet portals just to complete a transaction. Furthermore, *fguonline.com* is backed by 150 years of banking expertise by the Bank of the Philippine Islands, its mother company. So just key in and click your way to unparalleled insurance services that only FGU Insurance Corporation can deliver.

Hi-tech convenience for business partners

Hi-tech convenience is made possible to FGU's over 1,000 intermediaries or business partners. Designed as a support tool for FGU business partners, *fguonline.com* allows members of FGU's sales force to communicate with FGU 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Instead of going to their branch office to confirm a client's coverage renewal, agents can simply access the site, send confirmation over the Internet, as well as access all pertinent data to help them provide better service for their customers. More importantly, *fguonline.com* enables valued business partners to keep track of their sales commissions, within a 30-day period. It also lets them view or print a copy of their sales commission earning---saving them precious time and allowing them to concentrate on the other important aspects of their career.

New portal for career & income opportunities

The site also opens doors to aspiring entrepreneurs who wish to avail of tremendous income opportunities. People who desire to become part of FGU's growing sales force may instantly apply by sending their résumé online for quick and prompt processing. This means that *fguonline.com* serves as the applicant's initial contact point that can lead them to a thriving career as an FGU sales agent.

Fun and freebies

The site also boasts of fun and interesting features. Show friends you really care by sending them FGU electronic Personal Accident (ePA) cards.

Present during the launch were (from left): FGU Insurance Corporation Marketing Director Herbert Tuason, Ayala Corporation Co-Vice Chairman and President Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, Deputy Insurance Commissioner Vida Chong, Civil Service Commission Chair Cora de Leon, Universal Reinsurance Corporation President Herminia Jacinto, Ayala Insurance Companies President Alfonso L. Salcedo Jr., and Bank of the Philippine Islands President Xavier P. Loinaz.

FGU Insurance Corporation Vice President for Information Systems Ernie S. Lim (leftmost) showing the features of fguonline.com to Mr. Alfonso Salcedo, Mr. Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II and Ms. Vida Chong.

Available in various designs for different occasions, FGU ePA cards do more than send cheer as they also come with a Personal Accident Insurance Coverage that provides protection to recipients, for twelve months. Send an FGU ePA card -- -it's the hassle-free way of showing you care.

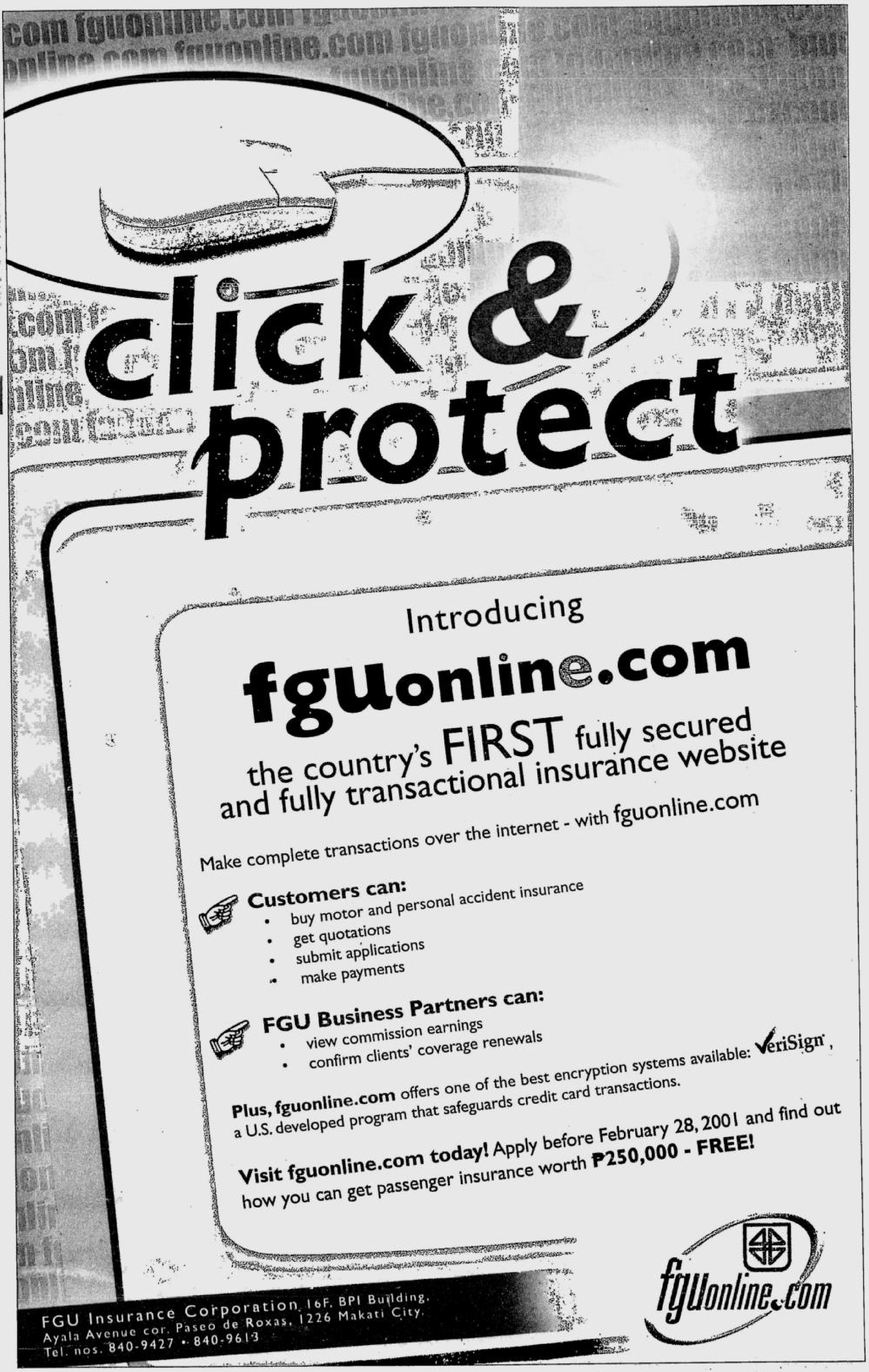
You can pay for it online and FGU will have your card delivered anywhere in the Philippines at no added cost!

The site also boasts of exciting seasonal freebies. For instance, if you purchase a car insurance online, you get up to P250,000 passenger insurance free!

All these exciting features and innovations complement the company's long history of pioneering breakthroughs and setting new industry standards.

Strength and security

Undoubtedly, FGU's trailblazing innovations, strength, security and strong leadership have combined to again revolutionize the Philippine insurance industry. And with the launching of their first fully transactional website, FGU reaffirms its commitment to provide Filipinos with superior insurance protection at the easiest way possible with just a few clicks of the mouse.



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A white-collar crime called money laundering

By Dennis M. Arroyo

PRIVATE prosecutors claim that deposed President Joseph Estrada accumulated P15 billion in assets during his 31 months in office. In a vast money laundering operation, the funds were allegedly stashed in several banks, using various aliases.

What exactly is money laundering?

Let's say a corrupt public official got a big horde of tax bribes. He must disguise his loot in such a way that he can use it and withdraw it safely. He then goes about many transactions to make his money look legitimate.

"Through money laundering, the criminal tries to transform the monetary proceeds derived from illicit activities into funds with an apparently legal source," says the "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 1997."

Encouraging kidnappers

Many types of criminals get into money laundering: the credit card swindler, the Abu Sayyaf terrorist, the criminal syndicate boss, the drug pusher, and the sleazy politico.

It's vital to fight money laundering, for it inflicts much damage on Philippine society. It promotes criminals, encouraging kidnappers and drug pushers. It protects terrorists and threatens national security. It breeds corrupt government officials. It also harms the economy by compromising banks and other financial institutions.

Money laundering siphons money away from private businesses and public tax coffers. It even washes on to other countries, due to the smooth global links of the banking system.

Three phases

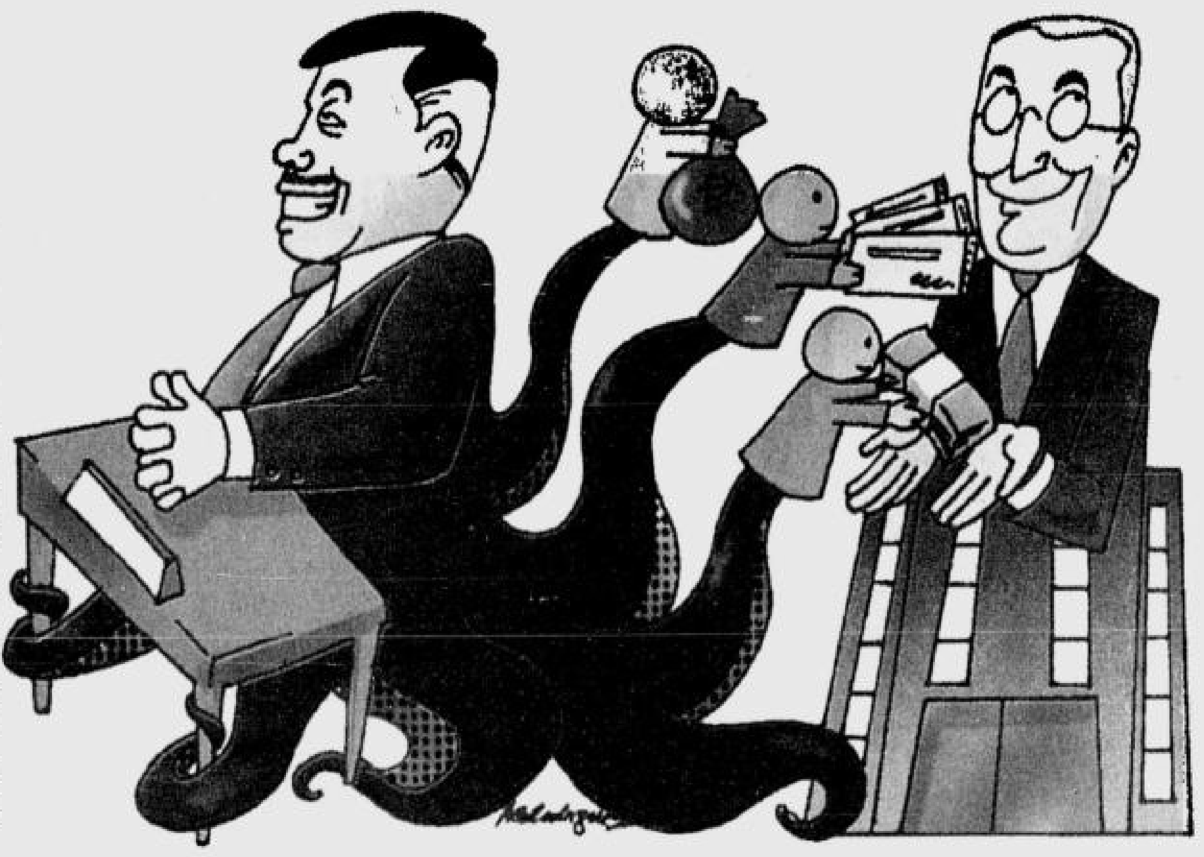
Experts count three phases of money laundering. The first is called placement, or stashing the funds into a financial institution.

"Money has been laundered through currency exchange houses, stock brokerage houses, casinos, automobile dealerships, insurance companies, and trading companies," continues the narcotics report. They use wire systems, shell corporations, offshore banking units.

For example, a shady politician asks friends to set up shell companies, or firms that exist only on paper. He invests in the companies, holding stock across a fake conglomerate of firms. The politician can also invest in shelter: he constructs houses for his many cronies and makes it appear that they are the real owners.

A kidnapper can divide the ransom money among his friends. The latter uses the funds to set up their own checking accounts. Over time they pay back the kidnapper by issuing checks to him.

This first phase of placement requires dividing big sums into small, according to the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF). The watchdog was created in 1989 by the industrialized nations.



"This might be done by breaking up large amounts of cash into less conspicuous smaller sums that are then deposited directly into a bank account, or by purchasing a series of monetary instruments (checks, money orders, etc.) that are then collected and deposited into accounts at another location," says the FATF.

The second phase is layering: money is moved from one institution to another in a confusing trail.

"The funds might be channeled through the purchase and sales of investment instruments, or the launderer might simply wire the funds through a series of accounts at various banks across the globe," says the FATF.

The third phase is integration. The crook gets back the funds from the various banks and invests them in a legitimate business.

"Generally, money launderers tend to seek out areas in which there is a low risk of detection due to weak or ineffective anti-money laundering programs," says the FATF.

Stopping money laundering

This hanky-panky can be most easily detected at the placement stage. That is why the authorities mandate rules that will spot suspicious deposits. Banks should have strict "know your depositor" regulations for accepting cash deposits. ("Of course we know Account No. 98-75382. He's the drug pusher from Pasay.")

How can layering be stopped? This is where bank transparency comes in. One finds growing recognition around the world that bank secrecy rules must yield to law enforcement. Government should have the power to open and examine accounts when conducting a criminal investigation.

The state will have to get tougher with the wayward banks of the future. Penalties for allowing money laundering may include blacklisting, fines, a required change in management, revocation of licenses, and outright prosecution.

What about the integration stage? The government should strengthen asset forfeiture laws. That is, the state will have the full backing of the law to seize ill-gotten wealth. That will keep money launderers on their toes. They can't assume that they are safe once they have reached the integration stage.

The integration stage is critical in the Philippine context. Corrupt politicians use their power to attract bribes for themselves or for their cronies. The money in turn flows back to the politicians during election campaigns. Power morphs into wealth then transforms into power again in a nefarious cycle. This must be stopped. *(Comments to dmarroyo@hotmail.com)*

Lazaro is new head of Ayala IT firm

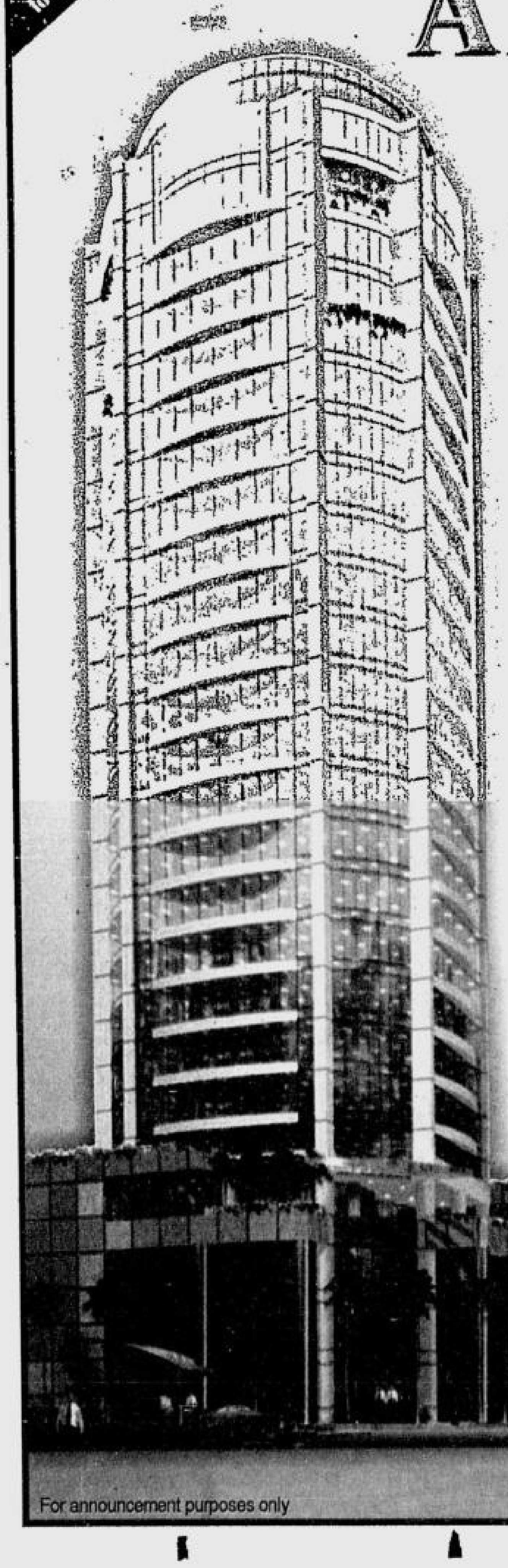
MOVEMENTS

JAIME Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, chair of iAyala, the holding company of the Ayala Group's IT-related investments, announced the appointment of Delfin Lazaro as CEO and president effective Feb. 1. Lazaro is currently the vice chair of the board and executive committee chair of Globe Telecom.

He is expected to oversee the growth of iAyala as the company expands both in scope and investment base, as well as ensure closer coordination between Ayala's IT and telecommunications strategies.

Lazaro has had extensive and distinguished stints in both the public and private sectors. He has earned a reputation for spearheading successful turnarounds, the most well-known of which is the timely resolution of the Philippine energy crisis in the late '80s which he facilitated as energy secretary. He sits in the board of director of various private corporations in the mining, manufacturing and technology sectors.

LAZARO: Distinguished track record in both the public and private sectors



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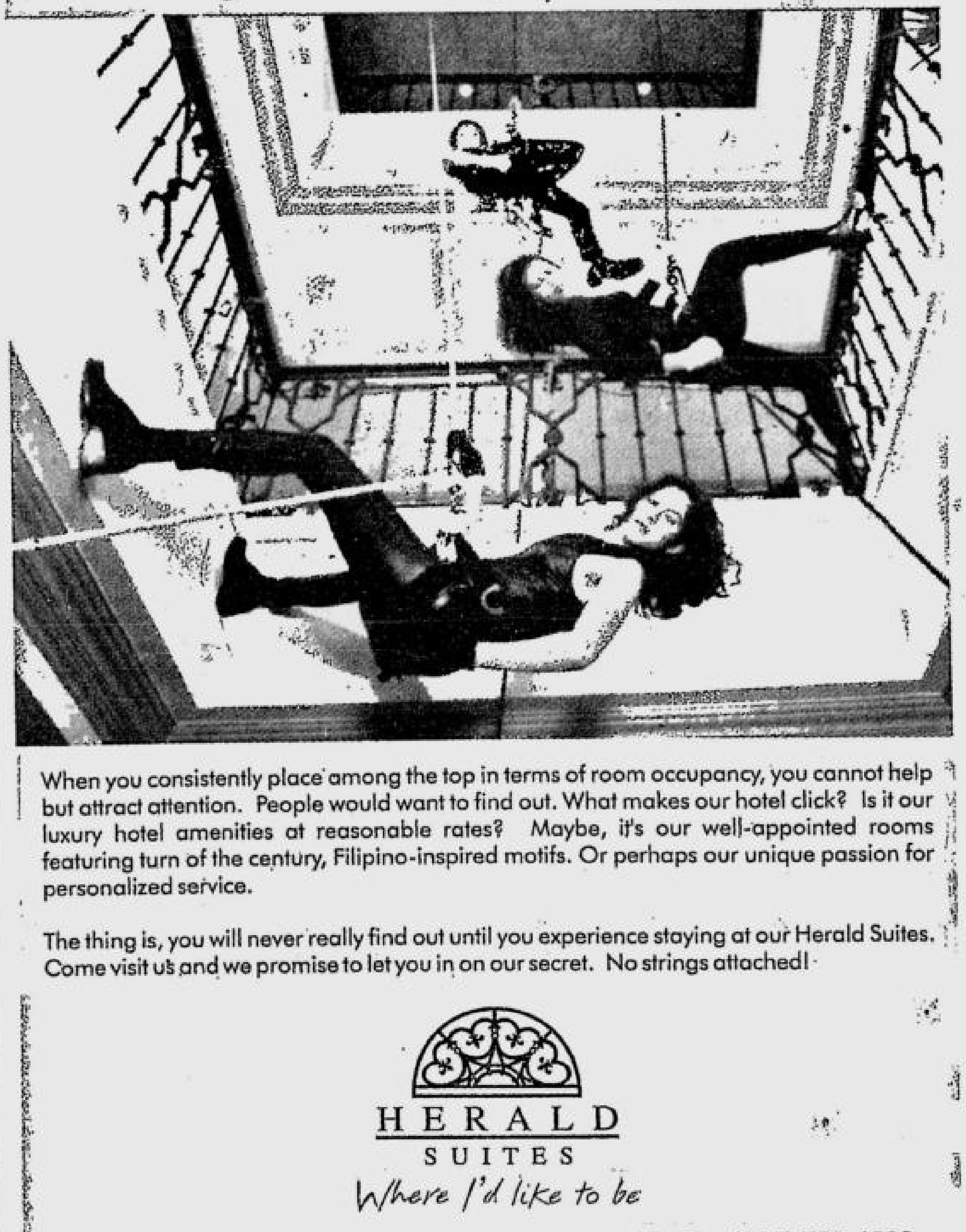

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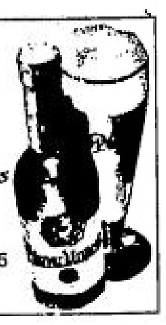

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Centro Escolar University pays tribute to the bamboo

THIS giant grass has often been a source of poetic inspiration for many Filipino artists. Its very appearance has always been compared to the Filipino character—resilient as it sways with the wind, pliant as it is bent for many uses and enduring as it stands firmly rooted on the ground when all else have perished.

Because of its abundance, this giant grass is treated with an almost casual disregard and valued only lightly. To call it the poor man's timber, however, is to do it an injustice, because bamboo is a material all its own. For generations, its constant presence has been a silent witness to the flourishing of Filipino culture and the unfolding of the country's colorful heritage.

The bamboo's central role in Filipino life cannot be denied. Its usefulness and value, however, is not in the plant itself, nor in the regard we give it. The true value of the bamboo lies in the hands of the craftsman, as they fashion structures and articles from this flexible material. Truly, the Filipino craftsman's ingenuity and artistry shine as he shows the world what he can create from this indigenous resource.

The charming bamboo house is a showcase of traditional Filipino life, reflecting how well our people adjust to the environment. A bamboo house is always a project in progress, because when the bamboo gives way or needs changing, parts of the house can be replaced, reworked and redesigned to accommodate changing needs. While there are distinct types of houses across the country, each one is as different as its owner. The *bahay kubo* can either be a temporary shelter for the farmer in the middle of a rice field, a vacation house for urbanites who long for the idyllic peace and quiet of rural life, or a modest abode for a family in the countryside.

The bamboo has a thousand-and-one uses. It is used for protection from lethal weapons of indigenous tribesmen to the familiar bamboo fences that protect land properties. It is used as an indispensable tool—to reach up, to push things off, to climb, to balance. Fishermen use it to aid their boats and even catch freshwater fish. Carpenters use it as scaffolding in building structures and farmers use it to guide the growth of tender saplings.

The bamboo is everybody's vessel. It is the pipe that brings down water from a mountain spring, the repository of valuables such as money, jewelry and even important documents; the cradle of many babies as they are lulled to sleep and the container of livestock and farm items as they are transported in baskets to and from the marketplace.

Bamboo is a big part of our folk art. We fashion kites and Christmas lanterns out of it, make toys, prepare fiesta arcs and other structures used in local festivities. We make useful and ornamental baskets out of it and use it as material for furniture, visual art and accessories. Indeed, the Filipino craftsman never runs out of ideas to fully use this splendid grass.

The bamboo also takes a special able in Filipino culture as musical and dance instruments. The Las Piñas bamboo organ is an exceptional example of the marriage of material and function on a grand scale. There is a variety of bamboo instruments, from wind to percussion, all used to celebrate the Filipino spirit as the peo-

CENTRO/ p.D4

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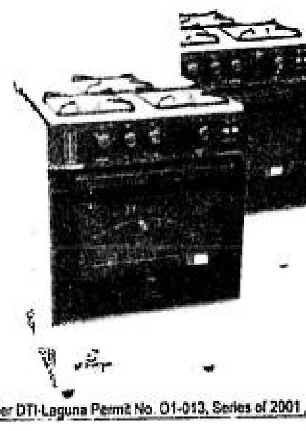

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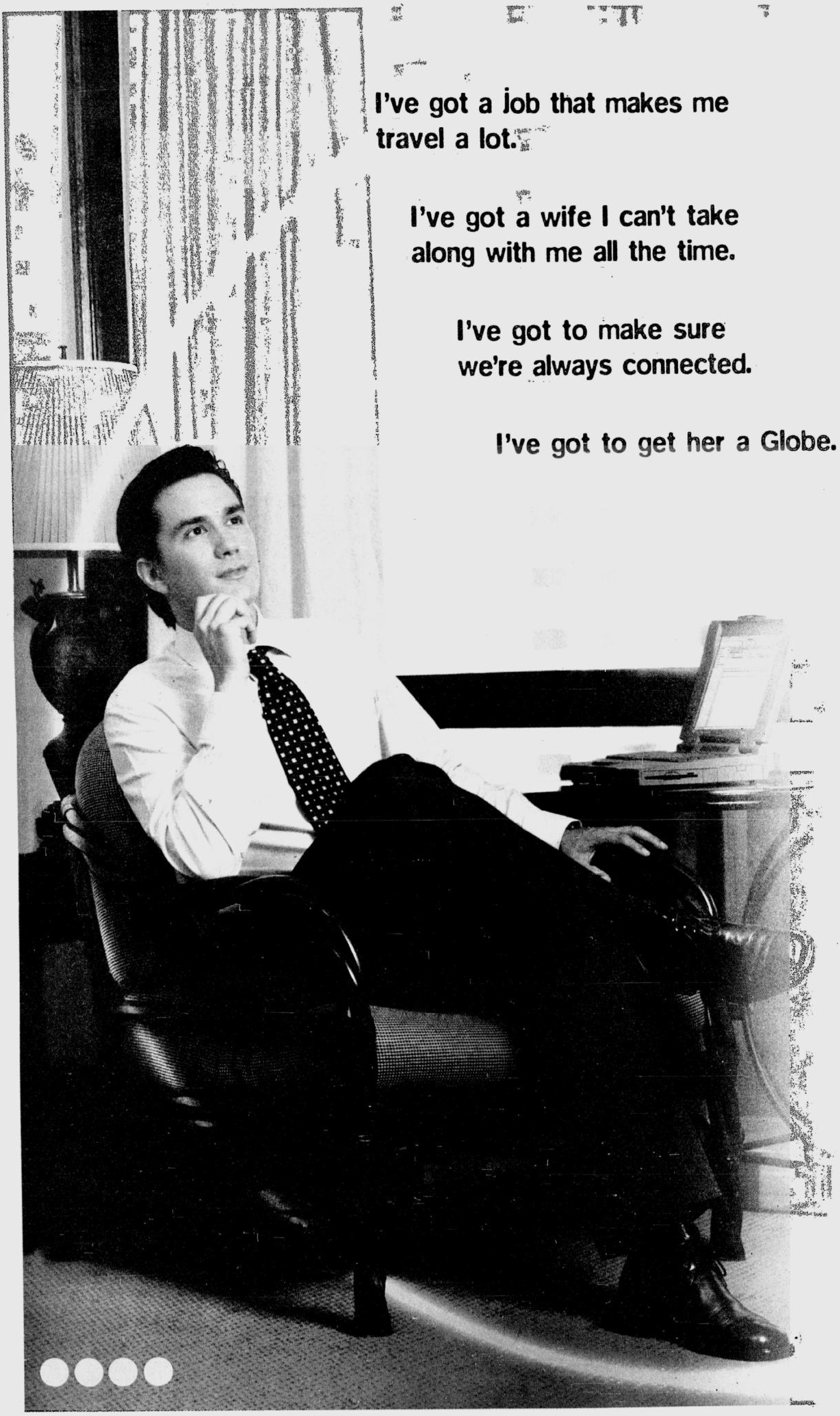
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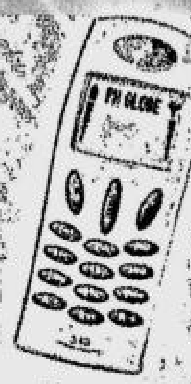

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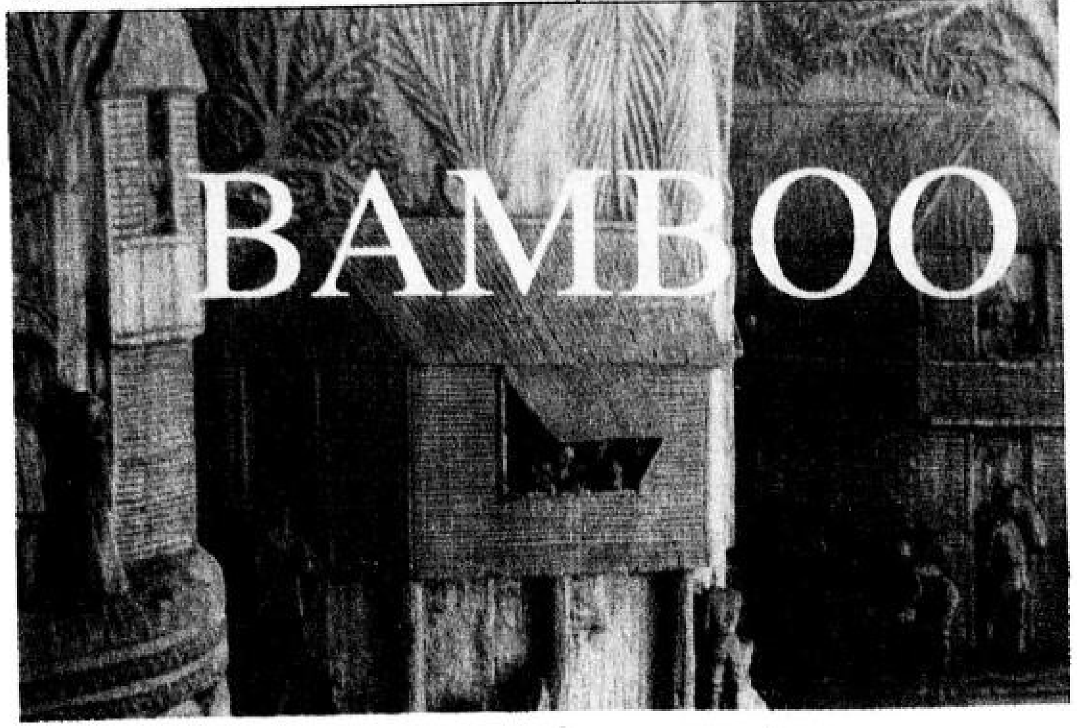


Centro Escolar University . . .

(From page D1)

ple imagine melodies and improvise rhythms, playing together or solo, capturing music in the bamboo.

Poems, stories, riddles, songs, recipes...the bamboo has always been a part of our lives. But whatever concept it may embody or emotion it may evoke, bamboo is our material. The bamboo is nature's gift to our land and it has silently but constantly figured in our culture and history. In spite of the emergence of new technologies in a new age, bringing with it the convenience of using metal and plastic, the old, reliable bamboo will always be handy to remind us of the charm of a simple and basic lifestyle. True to its nature, it will evolve with the times, because to the Filipino craftsman, no other material is as popular, as versatile, and as gracious as our bamboo.

From up north in Ilocos to down south in Basilan, CEU researchers and creative team members traveled and brought back with them a renewed pride for our heritage and a deepened admiration for the Filipino craftsman. This book "Bamboo" (by Maria Elena Paterno-Locsin, published by the College of Dentistry and Nursing of the Centro Escolar University) tells their stories. It's now available in bookstores.

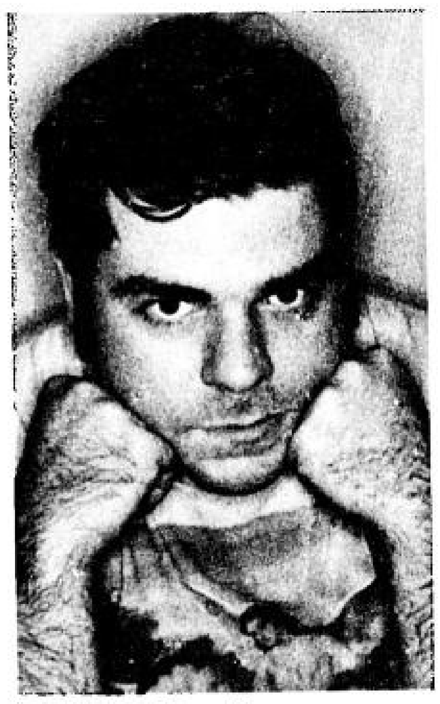
UST and La Salle-Bacolod to host Philippine-British Literary Conference

TWO of Great Britain's brightest young writers will grace the fifth annual British-Philippine Literary Conference on Feb. 22-27. The British Council of Manila has announced fictionist Suzannah Dunn and poet Roddy Lumsden will join top Filipino writers in tackling the theme of the conference, "Mapping the Literary Terraim: Writing in English in the 21st Century."

Dunn is the prize-winning author of "Quite Contrary," "Tenterhooks" and "Venus Flaring." Lumsden's first collection of poems, "Yeah Yeah Yeah," was finalist in the Forward and Satire Prizes. His second collection, "The Book of Love," was shortlisted for the 2000 T.S. Eliot Prize.

This year, the conference will have two legs, Manila and Bacolod. The University of Santo Tomas will cosponsor the Manila leg on Feb. 22 and 23 at the audiovisual room of the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters (G/F St. Raymund's [AB-Commerce] Building, UST campus, España, Manila).

To join Dunn and Lumsden are 1998 Centennial Literary Prize awardee Cirilo Bautista, poetess Rebecca Añonuevo and fictionist Carlos Aureus. Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta, director of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies, will chair the Manila conference.


POET Roddy Lumsden

The University of St. La Salle will cosponsor the Bacolod leg on Feb. 26 and 27 at the Balay Kalinungan Retreat House, University of St. La Salle campus. To join the British writers are Dimalanta, Ramon Magsaysay laureate F. Sionil Jose and poet-essayist Jose Wendell Capili. Elsie Coscuella, St. La Salle's vice president for academic affairs, will chair the Bacolod conference.

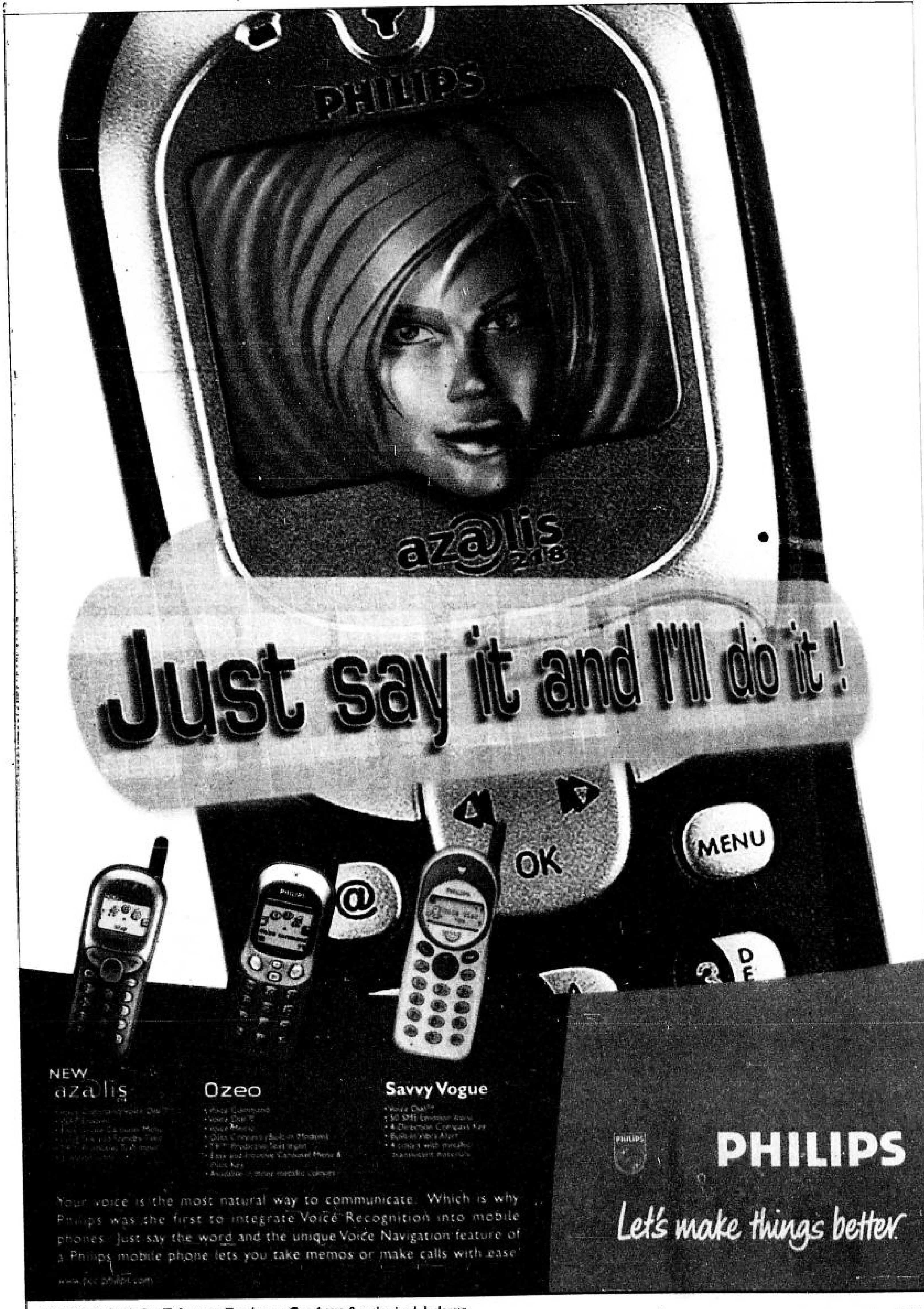
The conference fee of P1,000 covers meals and materials. Applicants must complete and return application form to The British Council, 10/F Taipan Place, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City (tel. 914-1011 to 20 and fax 914-1020) on or before Feb. 15.

Call The British Council, the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies (Tuesday to Saturday) at 731-3101, local 8281, or the University of St. La Salle at (034)433-0078.

British love poetry and songs at Shangri-La Plaza

SHANGRI-LA Plaza Mall and The British Council present an evening of love poetry and songs by some of Britain's most passionate writers on Feb. 11, 5 p.m. at the mall's 2/L spiral staircase lobby.

Directing the show is Angie Magbanua, who recently attended a literature showcase at the Edinburgh International Festival. Entitled "How Do I Love Thee?," the performance will highlight readings from works of famous classical romanticists like Elizabeth Barrett Browning and contemporary British writers. This is Magbanua's first directorial project after her Edinburgh exposure. Performing are Lance Raymundo, Miren Alvarez, Paolo Fabregas and Lyn Sherman. Bobby Gomez is musical director. Call 633-4491 or 914-1011.



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Dumaguete National Writers Workshop sets deadline

THE 40TH edition of the National Writers Workshop, the longest-running in Asia, will be conducted on May 7-25 in Dumaguete City.

Workshop director Edith L. Tiempo, National Artist for Literature, says the deadline for applications for fellowship is on March 10.

Applications should contain the following: biodata with 2" x 2" ID photo, a letter of recommendation from a teacher or professor, hardcopy of seven to 12 poems and/or three to four short stories in English, as well as accompanying diskettes with the manuscripts, preferably in MS Word or PM5.

These should be sent to Dr. Edith L. Tiempo, director, National Writers Workshop, c/o CAP College Foundation Inc., 2/F CAP Building, Rizal Boulevard, 6200 Dumaguete City.

Fellowship will cover lodging and a substantial stipend for the full three weeks of the workshop as well as reimbursement for one-way air fare.

Dr. Tiempo will be assisted by a revolving set of guest panelists who are among the country's topnotch poets and writers.

The Creative Writing Foundation Inc., headed by Susan Lara and Dr. Gemino H. Abad, assists Dr. Tiempo in the administration of the annual summer workshop.

POWERBOOKS CARD TAKES UP A GOOD CAUSE

As part of its Powercards rewards program, Powerbooks recently signed an agreement with Erda Foundation Inc. and Wordlab School Inc. to set up a donation program where points accumulated from using the Powercards may be converted into money which can be donated to charities. "We've made Powercards Rewards different to make a difference for our customers and for the needy and learning-disabled Filipino children," says Powerbooks operations manager Adrian Ramos. At the signing were (right to left) Adrian Ramos, Powerbooks operations manager; Victor Villanueva, executive director, Wordlab School Inc.; Dolora Cardeno, executive director, Erda Foundation Inc.; and Peter Perfecto, COO of DevCap Asia, the credit card service provider of Powerbooks. Call 912-3048 or 912-3074.

Laguna travel book to be launched

ANVIL Publishing Inc., with the Province of Laguna and the Laguna Tourism Council, will launch "Cabinet of Wonders and Other Laguna Stories" by award-winning writers Anita Feleo and David Sheniak on Feb. 6, 6 p.m., at the Executive Lounge, 25/F Tower One, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue corner Pasco de Roxas, Makati City. The launch is to be cohosted by the Laguna Investment Bureau.

Longtime city folks Feleo and Sheniak write about Laguna and its many wonders with the exhilaration and thrill of a first-time love. Their stories are full of the marvels of the province like jeepney art, woodcarving done by masters, a pregnant Virgin Mother and some little-known Rizal anecdotes, among others. Like the numerous 100-year-old trees that cohabit with the gentle and persevering folk, Laguna has weathered the onslaught of modernization and managed to keep its heritage intact. The book is a rare but welcome addition to publications on local histories.

Feleo and Sheniak have written numerous travel essays for several publications and are the authors of "Two for the Road," which has won the Department of Tourism's Kalakbay Award.

Iluko fictionist at UP

JUAN S.P. Hidalgo Jr., the National Fellow for Iluko Literature of Likhaan: The UP Creative Writing Center, will deliver a lecture on Feb. 8, at 10 a.m. at the Pulungang Recto (formerly FC Conference Hall).

The lecture is part of the "Living Voice in Conversation Series," one of the CWC's longest-running programs. Hidalgo's lecture is dedicated to the memory of Fr. Jose Burgos, the martyred reformist priest, himself an accomplished and influential writer.

Hidalgo—a novelist, poet, fictionist, essayist, biographer, translator and editor—is considered not only the cornerstone but also the father of the modern Iluko short story. He studied at the UP and the University of the East, and served as managing editor of Bannawag before his retirement in 1998. He wrote the novels "Dernaas ken Pannakatnag (The Cliff and the Fall)" and "Saksi ti Kaunggan (Inner Witness)," and the collection "Bituen ti Rosales ken Daddum pay a Sarita (Star of Rosales and Other Stories)." He has received the following major awards: the Gawad CCP Pambansang Alagad ng Sining sa Panitikan (1991) and the Gawad Pambansang Alagad ni Balagtas (1995) from the Writers Union of the Philippines/Umpil.

CWC director Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo will deliver the welcome remarks, while Dr. Lilia Quindoza Santiago will act as emcee (moderator). The public is invited.

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The magnificent Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang

SPACED OUT

Augusto F. Villalon

THE UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards program singles out the most outstanding private-sector individuals and organizations that have contributed to the conservation of buildings and structures of heritage value in the 46 countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

The awards promote the conservation of the region's built heritage, often threatened by unchecked development, neglect or inappropriate reuse. Highlighting successful preservation efforts encourages similar projects while advocating the culture of preservation and conservation through the use of appropriate techniques.

Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion received the Award of Excellence for the first Asia-Pacific Awards last year. The structure was the former mansion

THE MAGNIFICENT/ p.E2

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   - Grand Draw Prizes
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     Third Prize - Games and Amusement Showcase
5. For the Daily Draws, the following shall apply:
   5.1 Computer-generated raffle numbers assigned to EPS purchases on a particular date are valid for that date only.
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   5.3 Draws will be held at the 15/F, BPI Head Office, Ayala Ave., Makati City on the following dates:

Purchase Dates	Draw Dates
Feb. 5 to Feb 11	Feb. 14
Feb. 12 to Feb 18	Feb. 21
Feb. 19 to Feb. 25	Feb. 28
Feb. 26 to March 4	March 7
March 5 to March 11	March 14
March 12 to March 18	March 21
March 19 to March 25	March 28
March 26 to April 1	April 4

A DTI representative will be present at each draw.
   5.4 The ₱1,000 prize will be credited to the winner's account within seven (7) working days after the draw date.
6. For the Grand Draw, the following shall apply:
   6.1 All computer-generated raffle numbers assigned to EPS purchases within the promo period are qualified for the Grand Draw.
   6.2 Grand Draw will be held on April 4, 2001 at the 15/F, BPI Head Office, Ayala Avenue cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
   6.3 An accountholder can only win once. If drawn more than once, he will get the prize with the higher value.
   6.4 All Grand Prize winners can claim their prizes at 15/F BPI Head Office Ayala Ave. Makati City. Just present your Express Teller ATM card and one (1) valid ID (driver's license, company ID, SSS ID).
   6.5 Prizes are not convertible to cash. All prizes are tax-free.
7. List of account numbers with corresponding computer- generated raffle numbers will be available at the following locations
•BPI Main Branch, BPI Head Office, Ayala Ave., Makati City • BPI Family Bank Main Branch, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City •BPI Baguio Burnham Branch, Baguio City • BPI Cebu-Mango Branch, Cebu City
8. Winners will be notified by registered mail. Complete list of winners will be published in a major newspaper with national circulation at the end of the promo.
9. Unclaimed prizes after 60 days from receipt of notification shall be forfeited with prior approval from DTI.
10. All Express Teller/BPI Direct accounts that are closed/terminated, dormant, under litigation or garnished during the promo period are disqualified.
11. All employees of BPI Unibank, its advertising and PR agencies, and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified.
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*Above rates are subject to 10% service charge and applicable government tax.
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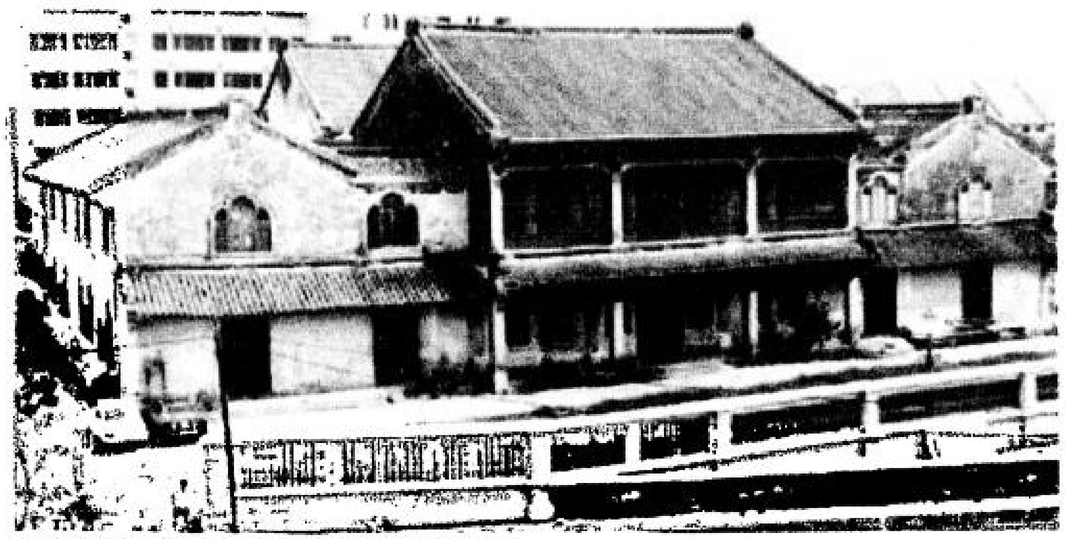
The magnificent Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion in Penang

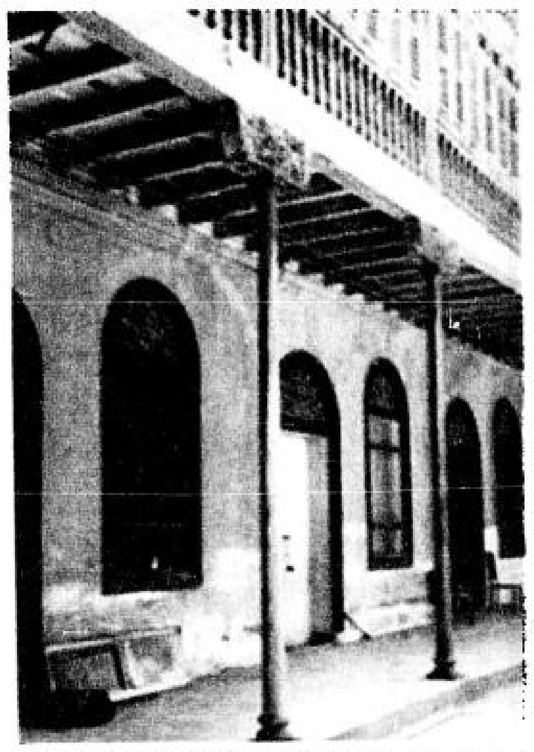
The restoration won the 2000 Unesco Asia-Pacific Heritage Award and has spurred heritage conservation in Georgetown, one of Asiaweek's most livable cities

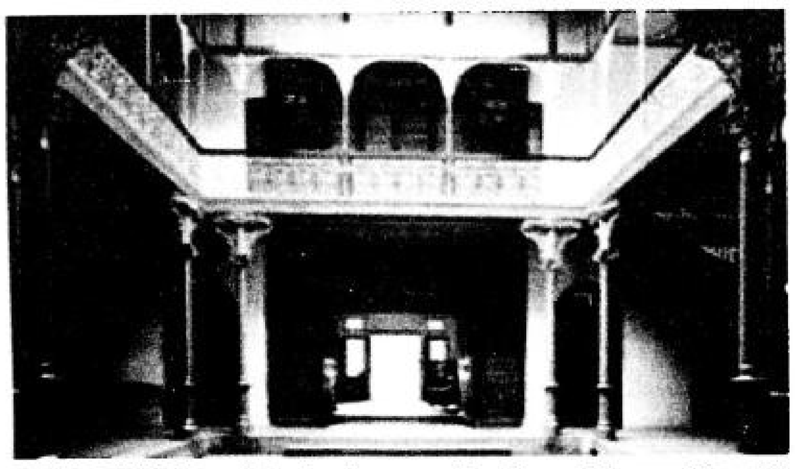
(From page E1)

of Cheong Fatt Tze, an extremely wealthy and influential rags-to-riches entrepreneur who died in 1916. Part of the vast estate left behind was his late 19th-century 38-room, five-courtyard mansion in Georgetown, Penang in Malaysia.

The mansion is a tribute to the technological. advances and the high level of local craftsmanship of the 19th century. A quintessential Chinese courtyard house, it is supported by an iron-frame cast in Glasgow, a structural system typical of the 19th-century Industrial Revolution structures in England.


THE RUNDOWN mansion before its restoration


CAST-IRON pillars hold up the second level railings of the verandah that run around the entire courtyard.


THE ARCHED fretwork framing the second-level verandah around the main courtyard of the house lends a European air to the Chinese architecture.

It owes its opulence to delicately executed Chinese craftsmanship that embellishes the structure throughout, bestowing it a strong visual identity that roots it to the Chinese in multicultural Georgetown. It stands out as a cultural statement of the fusion of western technology with eastern artistic sensibility.

A private consortium purchased the derelict house in the early 1990s with the vision of constructing the first high-profile restoration project in Penang. They saw themselves as caretakers of the building who "treaded lightly and touched softly." With a budget of $2 million, the restoration took six years. The structure was extensively photographed as intensive research was conducted through the archives, oral history, interviews with historians and traditional craftsmen, and the Beijing Institute of Ancient Architecture.

Discovery

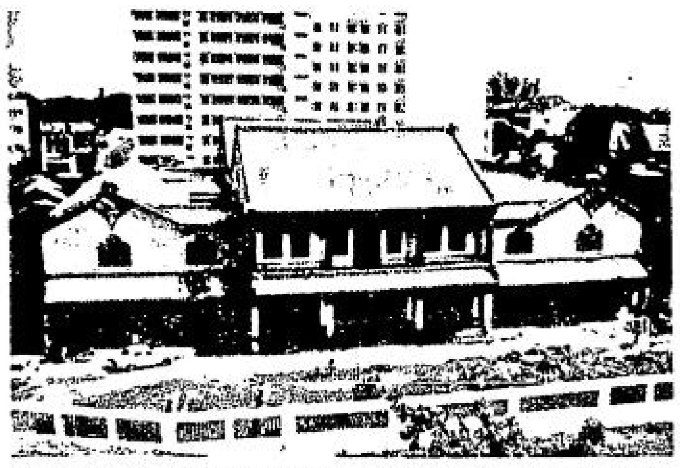
The restoration was a process of unhurried discovery. Changing only what needed changing and only using traditional construction methods, old materials were recycled by local artisans. The roof was renewed with tiles of the original pattern imported from China and installed with traditional lime mortar and fiber and animal hair reinforcement as done in the past.

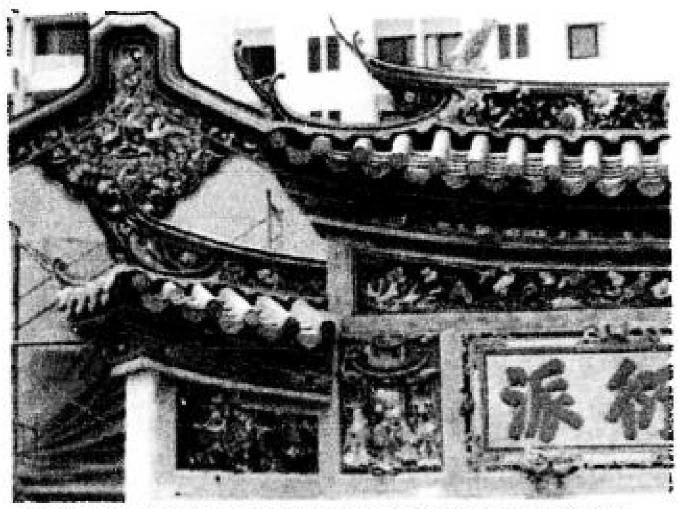
Exquisite Chinese mosaic porcelain works that provided texture to the roof and many of the exterior wall surfaces were replaced through replicating the original technology. Colored bowls were especially fabricated in China, cracked and their concave surfaces arranged to form an incredibly rich three-dimensional mosaic.

Gilding in the interiors was so well done that the accumulation of dirt was simply removed to expose the original. Timberwork was finished in the old manner with 71 layers of "*ta cik*" (big oil) tree sap to provide a hardened finish to last another century while protecting the wood from termite infestation.

Walls have returned to the original indigo color, achieved through a mixture of traditional Chinese "*tung* oil" and indigo lime wash.

The restoration was a time for discoveries. The house was designed around feng shui, numerology and spiritual emanations to ensure the harmony of man and nature, but most importantly to keep nature's wealth drawn inwards. Therefore, instead of dropping straight to the ground, rainwater gutters take circuitous route that cools the ceilings and floors as it snakes through the house before finally exiting the structure. Air circulation is directed throughout every part of the building. The courtyards ensure the co-existence of man and nature, while gold buried in auspicious corners ensure wealth.


NOW a landmark of Penang. Neighboring mansions in front of the Cheong Fatt Tze have undergone restoration and the original flavor of the street has returned.


A CLOSEUP of the multigabled roof shows the high-level restoration of the roof and the intricate mosaic work.

It is outstanding that no new additions have been made to the original structure except for the fitting in of new plumbing and electrical works.

The developers of the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion saw the project as fulfilling the need to put theory into practice, to show that the preservation of the mansion would serve the Penang population by offering a place where the people could touch base with their heritage. The structure is seen to function as a social center: It will have restaurants, function rooms, seminar rooms and even accommodations.

Catalyst

The project has been a catalyst to preservation in Georgetown. Already the neighboring mansions have been restored. They are now popular restaurants, shops and galleries.

Most of all, the determination of my colleagues and dear friends, Laurence and Lin-Lee Loh, principals of the firm Laurence Loh Arkitek and leading lights in the Penang Heritage Trust, have made the project an outstanding success with their painstaking attention to detail and their commitment to see it through no matter what obstacles came their way.

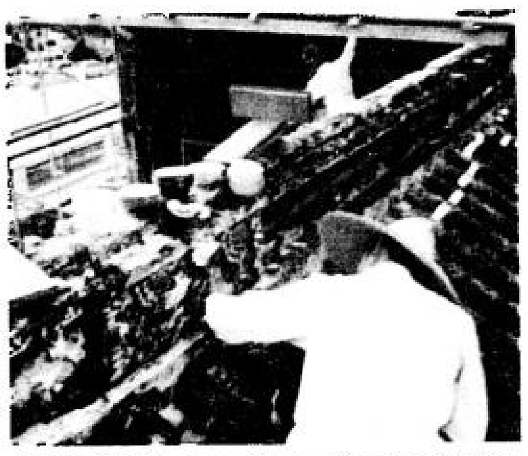
The Unesco Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards 2000 Citation reads: "The restoration of the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion is an exceptional achievement in conserving the historical and cultural heritage of the Georgetown community. History was preserved by meticulously applying extensive research on the architecture, traditional artisan skills and materials to the restoration. Imported materials to match the original as well as skilled artisans ensured the authenticity of the methodology of construction; when unattainable, necessary skills were revitalized based on research coupled with scientific analysis. The mansion's restoration has had enormous impact and influence on the preservation movement in Penang by prompting the local government to enact strong heritage preservation measures. It has stimulated restoration and adaptive reuse of structures in its immediate vicinity and serves as a model for restoration projects throughout the city of Georgetown and, indeed; the broader region."

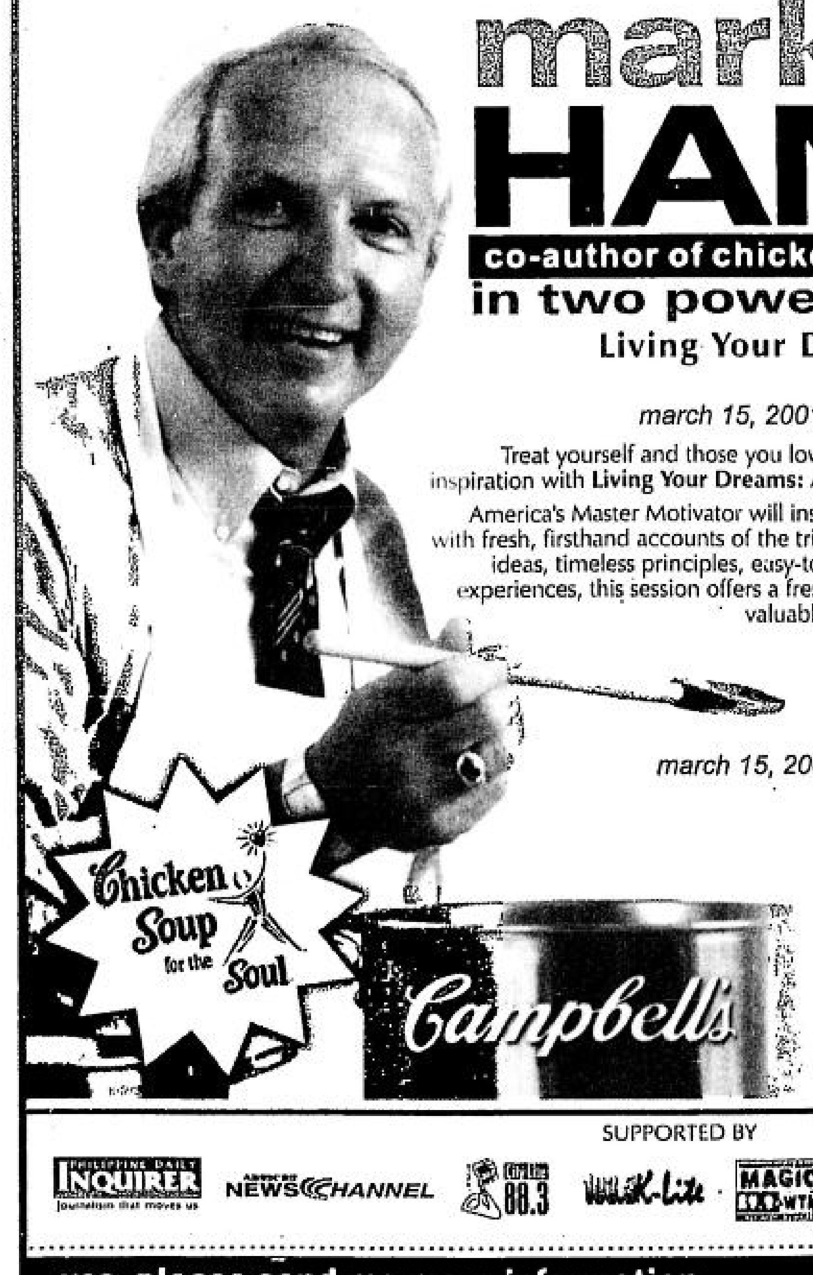
Unesco invites entries to its contest for the best-conserved or restored building, structure or complex of over 50 years old. Projects completed within the past 10 years are eligible. The contest will give an Award of Excellence, two Awards of Distinction and five Awards of Merit.

Although deserving projects exist in the country, no entries were received from the Philippines last year. If you have an entry for the 2001 Unesco Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards, you can get information and application forms from http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/awards/.

In Manila, you may get the application forms from the Unesco National Commission of the Philippines, Department of Foreign Affairs on Roxas Boulevard (tel. 834-4843) or at the Heritage Conservation Society Secretariat at the Museo Pambata on Roxas Boulevard at the Luneta (tel. 521-2239). Deadline for submission of entries is March 31.

E-mail the author at afv@pacific.net.ph


CRAFTSMEN painstakingly restore the Chinese mosaic work on the roof using colored bowls especially fabricated in China that are cracked and convex shards hand-set into patterns of incredible three-dimensional quality.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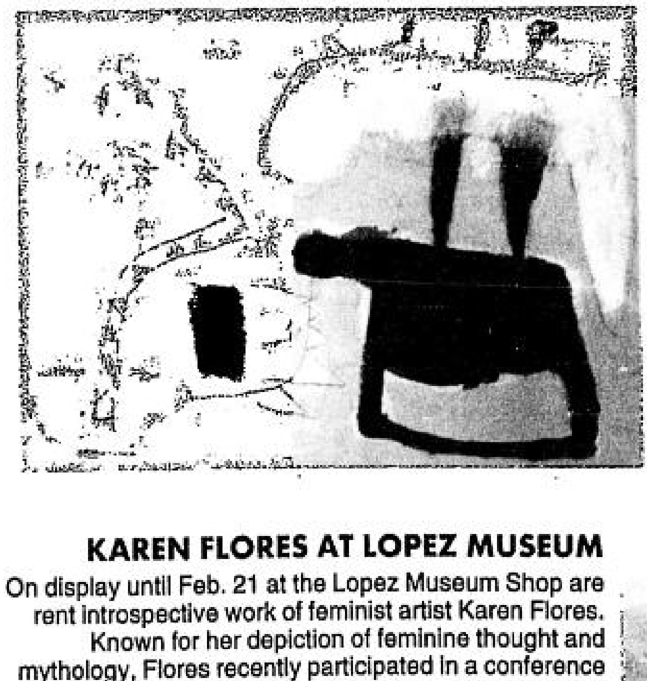
AVAIL OF OUR EARLY BIRD RATES BEFORE FEB. 15, 2001

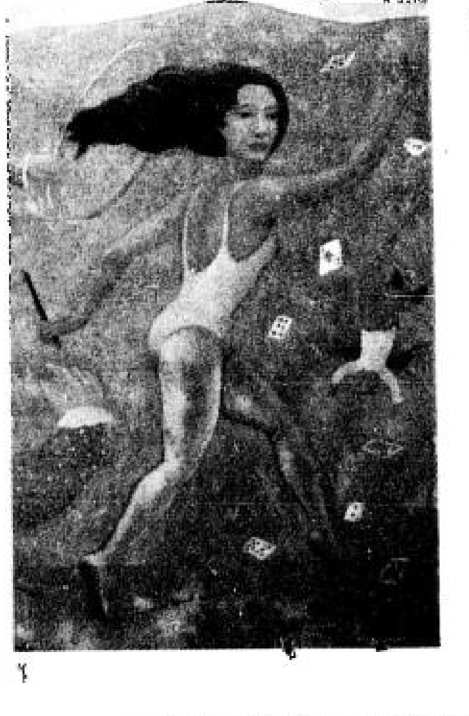


PACQUING AT FINALE

Bernardo Pacquing is holding his fourth one-man show, "False Density," at the Finale Art Gallery, 4/L SM Megamall A, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit runs until Feb. 11. Above is "La Wally 2000," house paint, pencil and crayon on canvas. Call 634-2410 to 11.

KAREN FLORES AT LOPEZ MUSEUM

On display until Feb. 21 at the Lopez Museum Shop are rent introspective work of feminist artist Karen Flores. Known for her depiction of feminine thought and mythology, Flores recently participated in a conference with four other women visual artists from Singapore and Australia. They have established a collective called Surge (Southeast Asian Union for Research and Regenerative Exchange). Their initial effort is to establish a Web-based forum that will tackle race, religion, region, rhetoric and realities. Call 635-9545 or 449-2355.



NATIVE WEAVES

Galeria de las Islas is holding a special exhibit dubbed "Philippine Weaves—Bakery and Textiles" until Feb. 28 at Hall 1, Galeria de las Islas, Intramuros. Call 527-2113.

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The image of Our Lady of Candelaria in Jaro, Iloilo continues to grow

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Darang

LEGEND relates that in the golden days, a fisherman discovered an image of the Virgin Mary on the banks of the Iloilo River. It was only 1 ft high, but to this day the image has continued to grow and is enshrined in a niche on the pediment of the Jaro Cathedral.

The feast day of the Virgin of Candelaria on Feb. 2 was a momentous day for the people of Iloilo and the Visayas, with many people coming by boat or by plane to Jaro to pray to her or to attend her novena Masses.

Fr. Dodong Billones, a secretary of Jaro Archbishop Angelo Lagdameo, recalls that when he was a little boy, his maternal grandmother Iluminada Bermejo would bring him to Jaro from Pa-ay town to attend the fiesta. Now that he lives near the cathedral, Father Dodong can now continue his devotion to Our Lady of Candelaria.

Although other churches in the country are also dedicated to Our Lady of Candelaria, it seems that the celebration in Jaro is the biggest so far. The earliest celebration dates back to 1874 when the Jaro Cathedral was also inaugurated.

When the Pope came on Feb. 20, 1981, he declared Our Lady of Candelaria as the patroness of Western Visayas. He also crowned her, much to the joy of the people of Jaro.

I was blessed to see her image in a visit to Iloilo with friends way back in 1995. Even then, we knew that the image was miraculous. We learned that in the olden times, she would disappear from her niche early in the morning. Then, people would see at this time a beautiful lady with long flowing hair bathing her child at the artesian well at the plaza.

This title of the Virgin comes from having borne in her womb the light of the world. Also on Feb. 2, the Church celebrates the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the purification of the Virgin Mary.

The more popular church near Metro Manila that celebrates this particular feast is the church in Silang, Cavite. Another popular church is the Paco Church in Dilao, Paco, which began the devotion in 1600 when Lt. Don Cristobal Mercado commissioned an image of the Virgin to be made.

In Silang, Cavite, the image of the Virgin of Candelaria was found in the mountains by a man named Andres. He kept her in his hut and prayed to her. However, the image would get lost where it was honored. This happened several times until the parish priest suggested that the image be transferred to the big church. This was done through a procession and dancing on the streets from the mountains to the church.

Finally enthroned in the big church, the Virgin was venerated and for a long time she was called La Anunciata by the Jesuits who administered the parish at that time.

The present parish priest is Fr. Cornelio Matanguihan who had the hagiography of the altar restored in time for the Virgin's fiesta on Feb. 2.

Our Lady of Manaoag in Leyte

MORE enthronements of our Lady of Manaoag are taking place in Leyte. Donated by Al Arriesgado, the images will be enthroned on Feb. 17 at the Naval Cathedral; Feb. 18, 7:30 a.m. in Leyte, Leyte and 4 p.m. in Kalubian, Leyte.

Diamond Jubilee in Manaoag

THE SHRINE of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of Manaoag will celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the canonical coronation of Our Lady on May 2. In preparation for this great event, a year-long lineup of activities which started last May has been scheduled to commemorate this event.

Choir news

A BOOK, "Responsorial Psalm," contains a collection of psalm refrains set to music by Raul Martin Velez, who directs the Saint Lorenzo Ruiz Music Ministry. It was launched last October at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Las Piñas City.

The book and cassette tape can be obtained free by calling Saint Lorenzo Ruiz Music Ministry at 871-2566 and 874-1366 or e-mail your request at lopezm3@goplay.com. You may also call Constancio Cadelina at 525-5302.

The cassette tape is a recorded album of songs for the Mass in honor of Blessed Pedro Calungsod.

Reunion at Tahanan ng Mabuting Pastol

TAHANAN ng Mabuting Pastol is a major seminary in Tagaytay for theology students who want to become priests. The seminary has produced many priests, three of whom are friends that I helped. A reunion of all priests and laymen in the ministry will take place on Feb. 12-16. It will be both an alumni homecoming and renewal. Please get in touch with Fr. Chito Tagle at (046) 413-1329.

Sto. Niño de Cebu

WE were blessed to have been able to fly to Cebu on Jan. 20 to visit the Sto. Niño de Cebu in His shrine at the Basilica. Our host, Edna Toral, met us at the airport and brought us to the Basilica where we joined thousands who were kneeling inside the church and praying to the Sto. Niño. We were just in time because the doors closed at 12 noon in preparation for the procession. I went to thank the Sto. Niño for my good health.

Masses for Judge Rebustillo

CHURCHES in Legazpi, Catanduanes, Camarines Sur Iligan and Davao held Masses on Jan. 20 for the repose of the soul of retired Judge Jesus O. Rebustillo, who passed away three years ago.

The priests who said the Masses knew the judge personally and loved him. They were Fr. Jerome Gonzales from Gatchitorena, Camarines Sur; Fr. Andre Lim, Legazpi; Fr. Jacinto Garcia, Libmanan, Camarines Sur; Fr. Joey Aguilar, Virac; Fr. Raleigh Siapno, Legazpi; Fr. Carlos Mosqueda, Baloi, Davao; Fr. Dante Anhao, Tambo, Iligan; and Fr. Rex Hidalgo, JPII Youth Center in Naga. Then, Fr. David Ramoso, Fr. Dennis Orara and Fr. Aaron de Dios concelebrated Mass at the Bicol Memorial Park where a Mass was said at 5 p.m.

Sto. Niño de Providencia

SINCE the image of the Sto. Niño de Providencia began sweating miraculous oil on Jan. 27, 1992, the number of His devotees has increased to thousands, not only in Metro Manila, but also in the provinces.

Some of them visited His chapel on Pijuan Street, BF Resort Village on His feast day. They came from the provinces of Isabela, Cagayan Valley, Ilocos, Davao, Iligan, Butuan, Zamboanga, Bacolod and Iloilo.

Most of them came to give thanks for physical healing, while others went to be healed. Since 3 a.m. of Jan. 27, buses of people parked along the streets near Pijuan Street and asked for the anointing of the oil.

The priests who anointed them were Benedictine priests like Fr. Basil Apostol, Fr. Alloy Maranan, Fr. Pio Lumibao and SVD priests Fr. Fred Reyes and Fr. Joseph Taschner. Fr. Joseph So also came in the afternoon.

They call themselves the Servants of the Sto. Niño de Providencia—men and women who dressed themselves in green with IDs around their necks. Heading this group is Bro. Dodong de Castro, who was assisted by engineers Edwin Cuidad, Rudy Hoshida and Doming Par, Pitch Gutierrez and Sonny Garcia, who came all the way from California to serve during the feast day of the Child Jesus.

The "servants" led in the sharing of healing testimonies and served sandwiches and tetra-pack juices to the people.

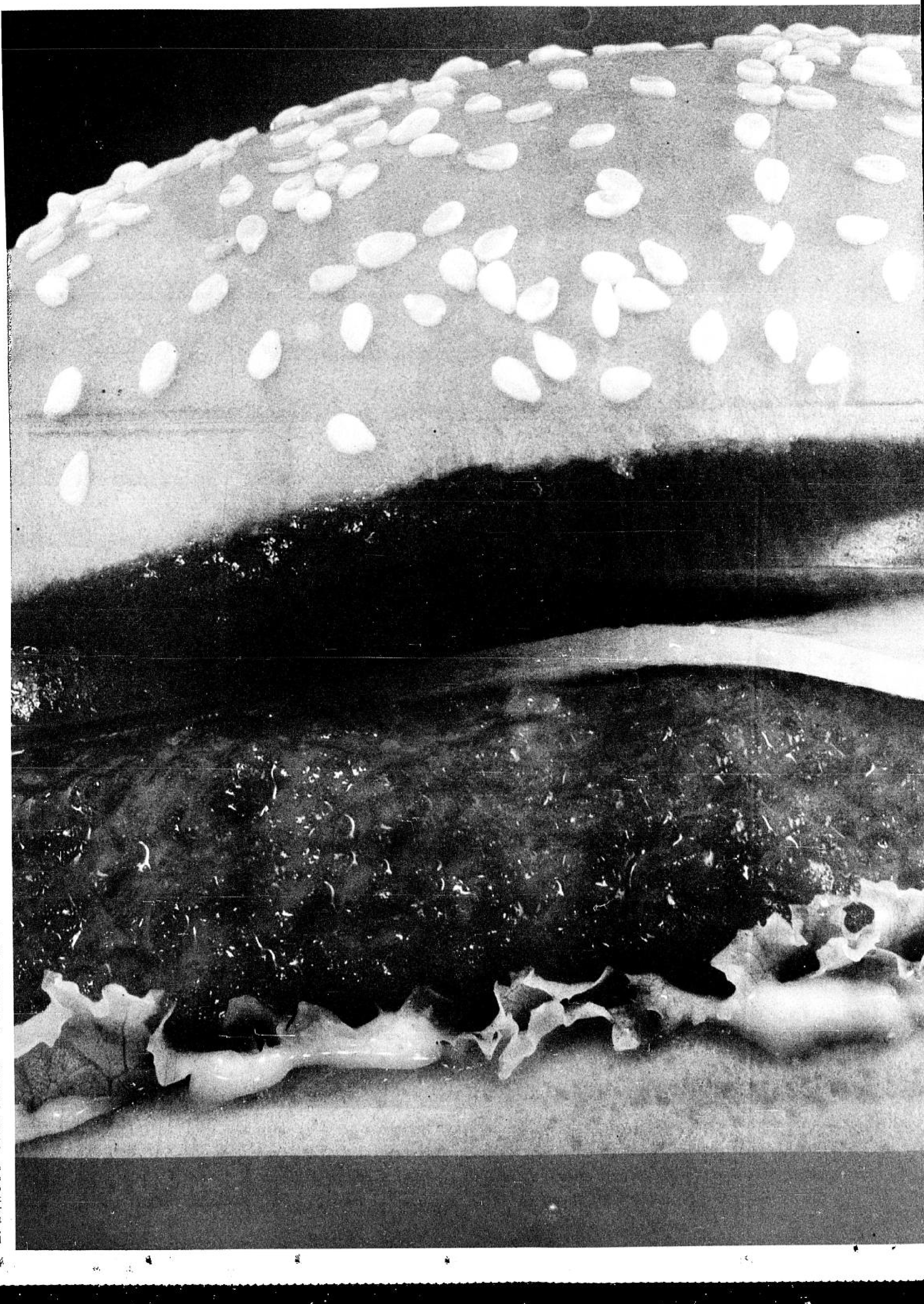
The "Niño" was vested in blue. Bert Mandragon, who dressed him up, told me the image was wet with oil. Since He began sweating oil in Jan. 1992, it has not stopped. This reminds me of the miraculous spring in Lourdes, France, which Bernadette Soubirous dug from hard earth on March 25, 1858. The spring continues to flow to this day, finding its way to the baths where sick people immerse themselves to be healed.

When word spread about this miracle of the Sto. Niño, numerous people came. One of them was the mother-in-law of George Yusun Jr., who printed 20,000 novenas to the Sto. Niño de Providencia as her way of thanking Him.

The Christ Child

THE PEOPLE who heard Mass at the Mary Mother of God Church in the village must have swelled to a thousand. They waited patiently for the Mass to begin while praying the Holy Rosary. Fr. Jerry Habunal, parish priest, concelebrated with Fr. Joseph Taschner. The devotees sang with the choir of the Franciscan Sisters and prayed as one body asking for both physical and spiritual healing.

I sat in the same pew with Ging Ong, who provided lunch, and Marie Yatco, her officemate. Throughout the Mass, people were attentive, devout in their responses and songs. They connected themselves in prayer.



Mozart with a paint brush

By Rowena C. Burgos

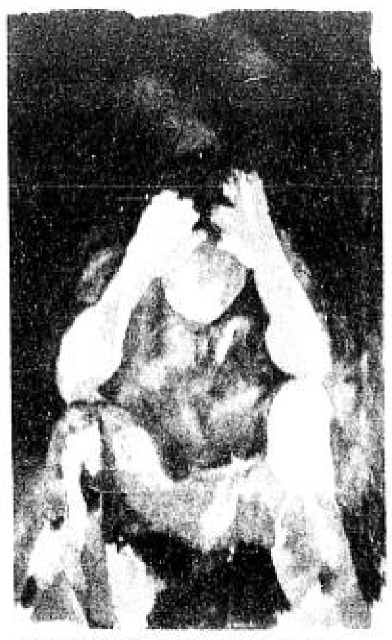
THERE is only one world that interests Jana de Asis Benitez, one filled with faces, cubist figures, abstractions, brushes, color and the canvas, waiting to be explored.

But her real world is more complicated, rife with class work and sports activities like skiing, soccer and basketball at the boarding school of Groton in Massachusetts and agents eager for profit. One recently insisted that she give up everything and go totally public. Jana politely showed the door. "I'm not interested in commercializing my art. It's not a passing hobby."

There is no question that the 15-year-old Jana is a phenomenon, who has been drawing and painting since she was a little kid. Her parents' plush apartment on Manhattan's East Side, which has become her studio, is strewn with clutter of dozens of canvases and a sea of art supplies. Her room has art books, particularly on modernists like Pablo Picasso, known for his wide range of styles from surrealism to cubism.

The question is, What kind of phenomenon is Jana? As a little kid, she would always be found with crayon in her hand, doodling on coloring books and anywhere she fancied. "Since then, my love for painting has become the most important in my life," says Jana with a broad smile and a purposeful and intelligent gaze.

She began painting seriously on the day she got bored with her math class and started drawing the faces of her classmates. And Jana has been painting the same theme for three years now.



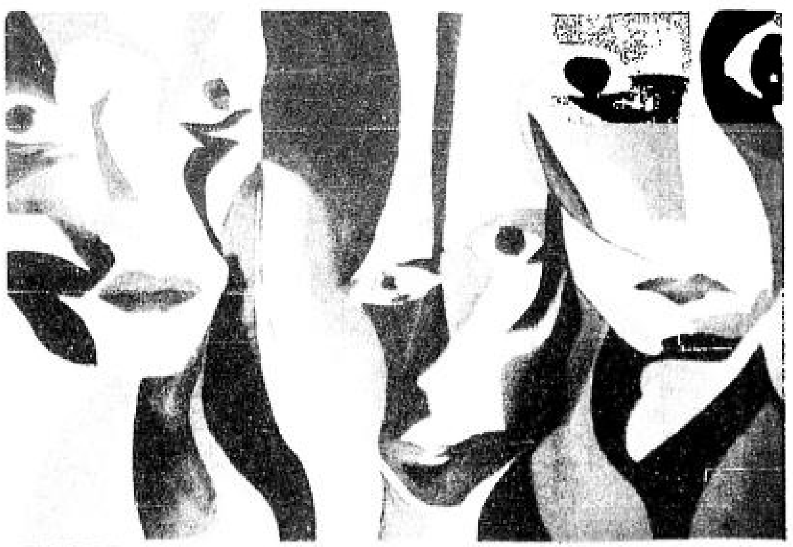
"THE DOG Ate My Homework"

"Friends often tease me about my obsession with faces and eyes especially. But I've also done abstract works, vague landscapes and rooftops in my show at the Pen in Makati a year and a half ago. My most recent works, which are not included in the New York show, revolve around images of the sky and sunset. Exploring similar themes helps you develop your skill, see a progression in your works and discover whatever you're searching for."

Jana has held solo exhibits at the Ayala Museum and Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati. She has an ongoing show at the Walter Wickiser Gallery in New York, USA. Titled "Pierce Through...," it showcases 50 pastels, acrylics and prints.

Unusually prolific

Though largely untrained in the conventional sense, Jana displays a keen and wide ranging awareness of developments in modern art. Her creations are a pastiche of early modern styles such as cubism, expressionism and fauvism.



"THREE Faces of Eve"

Clowns on "Parade I," "II" and "III," for instance, are faceted planes of cubist structure. The "Three Faces of Eve" is characterized by its bold use of vivid fauvist color and sinuous contours. "Twisted" and "Double Jeopardy" mirror the works of Wassily Kandinsky who brings harmony out of complexity. "The Dog Ate My Homework" reflects German expressionism.

But such creations contain a number of elements which make them solely the young artist's own. There is, for example, the recurring motif of the eye which pierces through the kaleidoscope of shapes and lines which make up the countenance of characters.

But what is striking in such lexicon of movements is her rich, poetic sense of fantasy. And this is evident in Jousting, Roots and Rhapsody in Red.

"The title of my exhibit, 'Pierce Through,' is a sort of metaphor. It refers to my duty as an artist—to penetrate through certain levels visually, intellectually and philosophically, while searching for certain truths which I must share with viewers."

Great asset

Those who have seen Jana's work speak of her in devotional terms.

Rosario Bitanga Peralta, artist and dean of the Philippine Women's University's (PWU) College of Fine Arts, says, "Unusually prolific for her age, Jana has shown development in her craft."

"Her vast energy shows in her production. She is prolific. Her being sensitive is still by far her greatest asset. Often, detailed drawing shows the devotion and sensitivity of the artist," comments Virgilio Aviado, a prize-winning artist and former president of the Philippine Association of Printmakers.

Jackie Arce Mauersberger wrote in Manila Bulletin: "She has a touch of cubism and her treatment of colors and lines shows her artistic values... the transitions from brilliant colors to vividly new impressionist palette proved the springboard to fauvism."

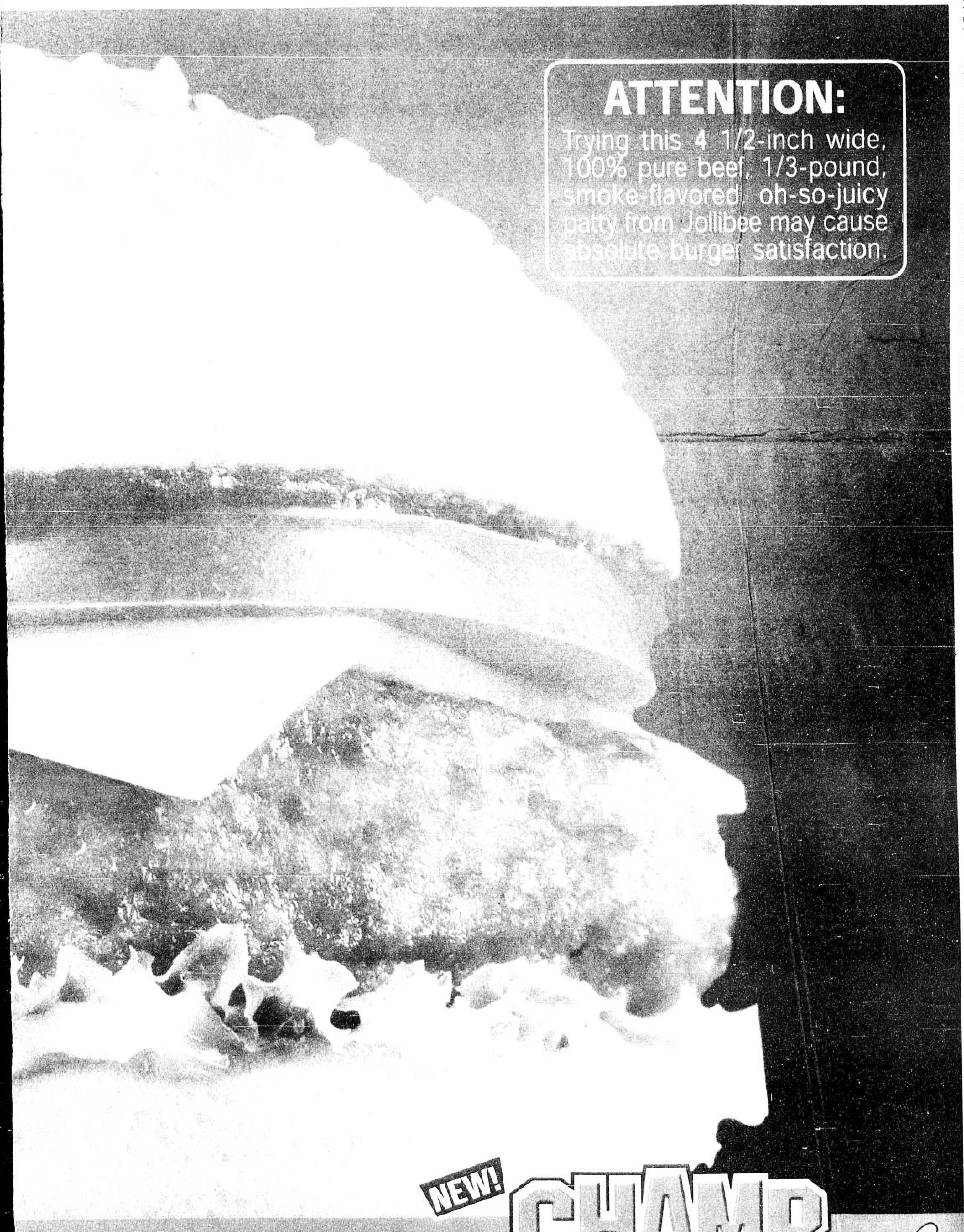
"What is striking for a female of her age is the integrity that comes with Jana's gift, her heightened state of aesthetic awareness. In a New York art scene currently awash in video and installation—and just non-art in general—Jana's drawings and pastels shine like diamonds in the night," wrote Gerritt Henry, a contributing editor for ARTnews and art critic for Art in America.

Since her parents noticed her uncommon passion for the arts, they have guided and supported their daughter in such endeavor. Her father, Jolly Benitez, PWU chair, has never failed to motivate and discipline her. "He never taught me techniques but he has helped me see for myself the beauty in my works," says Jana who plans to take summer classes in anatomy, perspective and technique at the Beaux-Arts in Paris. Her mom, Joanne de Asis, an investment banker in New York, also provides the same amount of moral support "even if she cannot draw a stick figure."

There may be more talented teenagers than Jana but what sets her apart is her concentration and focus beyond her years. She works not like a child but more like an experienced painter—preparing her canvases to give them a raised texture of brushstrokes, sketching her Cubist figures and abstract quadrants of shapes before starting to paint, considering color, contrast and composition.

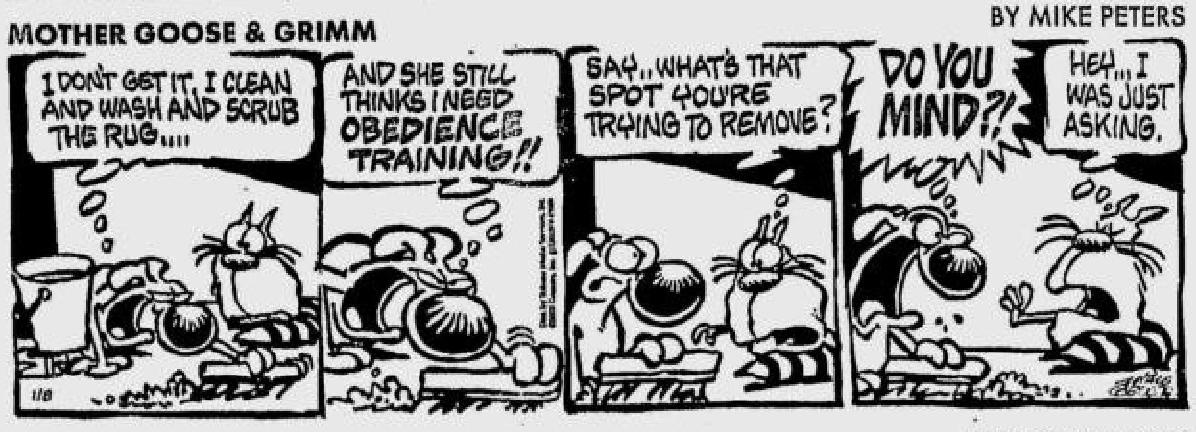
Her works reflect Picasso's cubist period but also incorporate elements of Henri Matisse, Joan Miro and Marc Chagall. Still, she saw little of these artists when first developing her own style. And this is proof enough of Jana's seemingly telepathic abilities.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph


ATTENTION:
Trying this 4 1/2-inch wide, 100% pure beef, 1/3-pound, smoke-flavored, oh-so-juicy patty from Jollibee may cause absolute burger satisfaction.
NEW!
CHAMP
DELICIOUSLY BIG
Jollibee

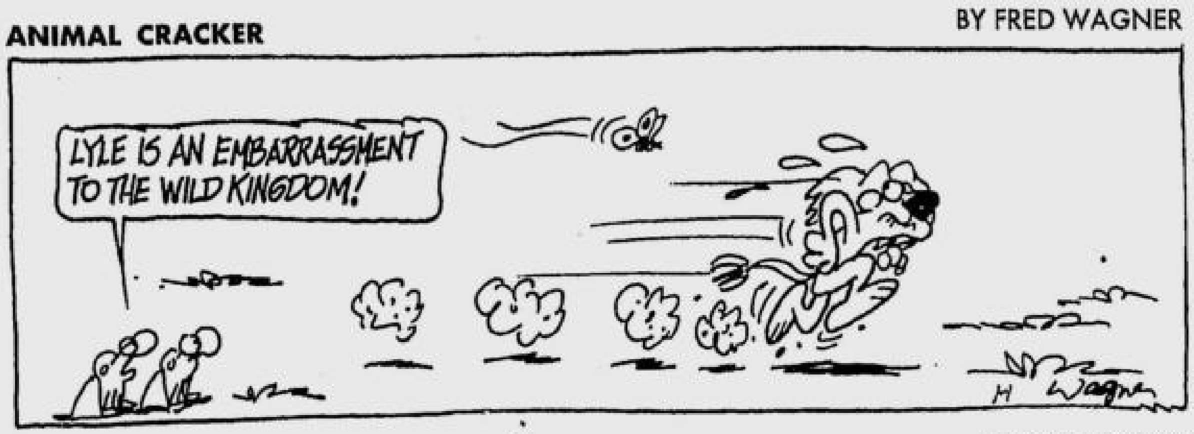
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


I DON'T GET IT. I CLEAN AND WASH AND SCRUB THE RUG....
AND SHE STILL THINKS I NEED OBEDIENCE TRAINING!!
SAY.. WHAT'S THAT SPOT YOU'RE TRYING TO REMOVE?
DO YOU MIND?!
HEY... I WAS JUST ASKING.
1/8

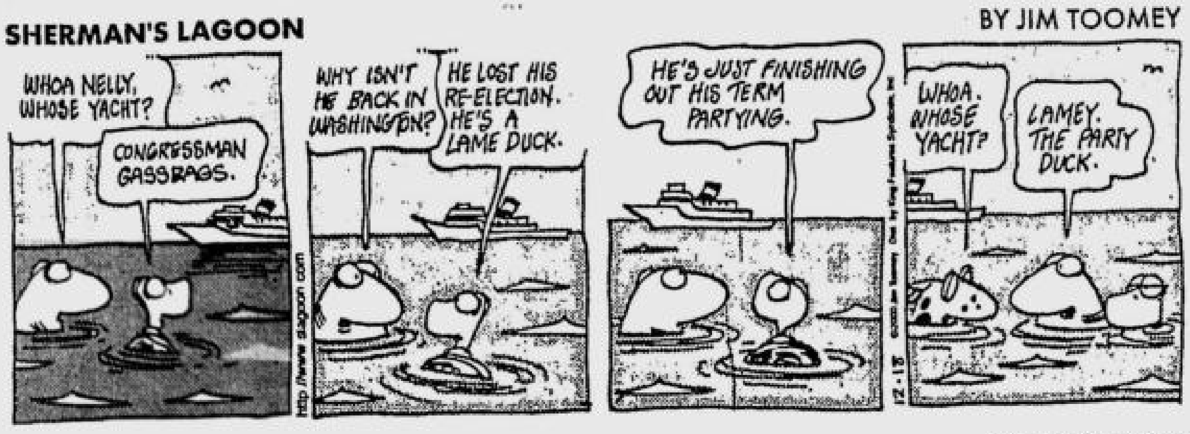
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


LYLE IS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO THE WILD KINGDOM!
H Wagner

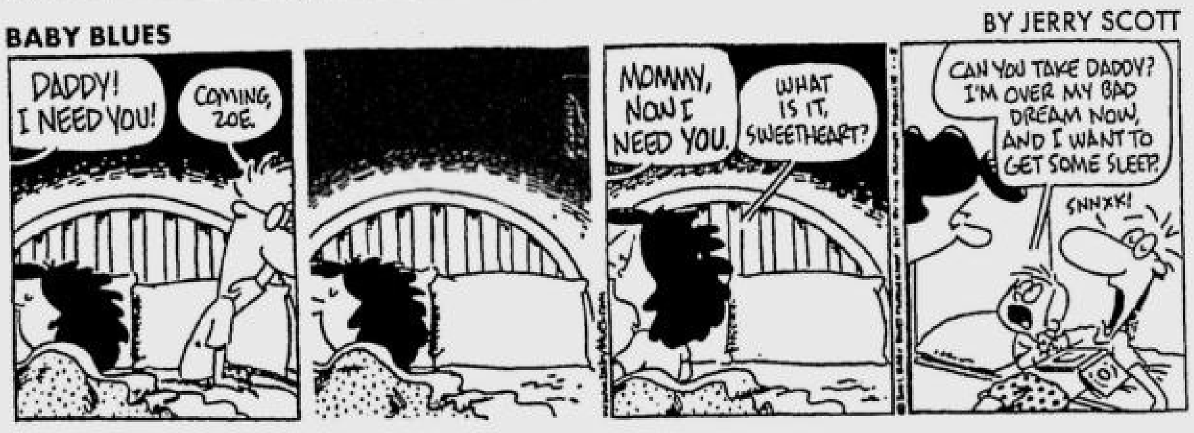
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WHOA NELLY, WHOSE YACHT?
CONGRESSMAN GASSBAGS.
WHY ISN'T HE BACK IN WASHINGTON?
HE LOST HIS RE-ELECTION. HE'S A LAME DUCK.
HE'S JUST FINISHING OUT HIS TERM PARTYING.
WHOA. WHOSE YACHT?
LAMEY. THE PARTY DUCK.
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


DADDY! I NEED YOU!
COMING, ZOE.
MOMMY, NOW I NEED YOU.
WHAT IS IT, SWEETHEART?
CAN YOU TAKE DADDY? I'M OVER MY BAD DREAM NOW, AND I WANT TO GET SOME SLEEP.
SNNXK!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Barbara Hershey, Hank Aaron, Roger Staubach, Andrew Greeley, Al Kooper, Bobby Brown, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Christopher Guest

Happy Birthday: You'll be well-prepared this year to take advantage of anything that comes your way. You are willing to change, and compromise will be second nature. Your ability to adapt and move with the times will enable you to reach the success you've been striving for. You will be the power behind every project you get involved in. Be confident and patient, and success will follow. Your numbers: 8, 17, 19, 21, 28, 33

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You need to interact with relatives who will be able to shed some light on your past. Trips will be rewarding but expensive. Try to get along with those you live with.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): It won't do any good to become angry over money matters. You have to set a budget and make sure that everyone in the family sticks to it.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You will be emotional about a family problem. Deal with the situation as quickly as possible and get back to doing the things you enjoy most.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will have to be careful that someone you work with doesn't misinterpret your actions. Your intentions may be honorable, but your approach may be questionable. Don't be too eager to let anyone know your secrets.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Get involved in groups that offer intellectual stimulation. You can meet potential new mates. However, make sure they aren't already involved with someone else.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Unite with colleagues, and you'll be surprised how well strength in numbers works. You can also make suggestions that will improve working conditions and efficiency.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You're in love with life. You should get out as much as possible. Lectures will bring you information as well as open up doors to interesting new connections.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Children will be frustrating. Don't give in to their financial demands. It is best not to take risks. Be sure to get enough rest. Fatigue will lead to minor health problems.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Courses you sign up for will turn into a form of entertainment. You are likely to meet someone special through those you befriend. Don't take on too much. Focus on your goals.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can accomplish a great deal if you focus on your job. Avoid becoming sidetracked by those eager to spread rumors about colleagues.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You can please your partner by just being there. You will enjoy challenging and competitive games. Your strong need to be first will lead you to the winner's circle.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You will have to be aggressive if you wish to stay on top of your personal relationship. Don't let anyone push you around or take you for granted. You set the rules and make sure your partner sticks to them.

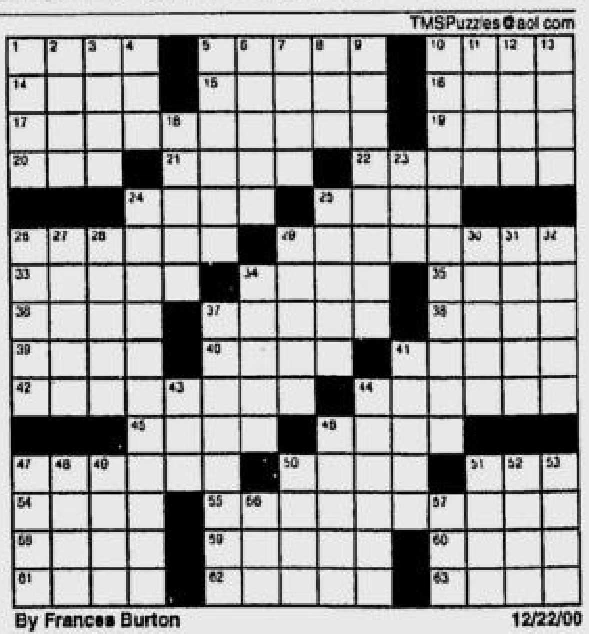
Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, aggressive and willing to stand up for your rights. You are one to take a chance and to look for alternative routes. You aren't one to follow the crowd or get involved in trendy groups.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS
1 Collars
5 Pace
10 Puts in turf
14 Charles Lamb
15 Use more lubricant
16 Track figure
17 Concisely expressed
19 Perlman of "Cheers"
20 Three-way junction
21 Sikkim's continent
22 Contemptibly small
24 Setting
25 Java's neighbor
26 In a sense
29 Sprint winner
33 States
34 Roe source
35 Parasites on people
36 Window part
37 Features of faces
38 "Rock of __"
39 Cruising
40 Round dance
41 Bloodhound's trail
42 Glasses
44 "__ a Girl in My Soup"
45 Traditional wisdom
46 Enjoy a book
47 Docking facility
50 Poppa pig
51 Feminine pronoun
54 Pizzazz
55 Inherent
58 Tennis zero
59 Lauder of cosmetics
60 Pierce with a horn
61 Exploit
62 Chicago tower
63 Switch position

DOWN
1 Rep. Gingrich
2 On the calm side
3 Digestive juice
4 Mule of song
5 Reliable
6 Bizarre
7 Ms. Lisa?
8 Easy dessert?
9 Spinsters
10 Excessively moralistic
11 Wonderstruck exclamations
12 Head-to-head fight for honor
13 Length of a visit
18 Coin-toss call
23 Mischievous fairy
24 Aerodynamic
25 Bob Hope film, "Call Me __"
26 Family men
27 Sailor's call
28 Taylor or Adoree
29 English county
30 "The __ Sanction"
31 Setting
32 Quizzes
34 Seaside
37 Pantomime game
41 Stock unit
43 Took first
44 Pokes fun
46 Lassoer
47 Canasta play
48 Hand-cream ingredient
49 Engage in a diatribe
50 __ carotene
51 Wait a minute
52 Roll-call response
53 First garden
56 Wind dir.
57 In the past



By Frances Burton
Summerville, GA

12/22/00

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

A	R	B	O	R		W	H	E	N		P	I	G	S
S	H	A	D	E		H	E	R	A		A	S	E	A
S	I	N	E	S		E	A	S	T		R	I	N	G
A	N	T		O	D	E	R		U	R	A	N	I	A
Y	O	U	B	U	I	L	D	B	R	I	D	G	E	S
			A	N	N	S		L	A	P	E	L		
A	P	H	I	D	S		D	E	L			A	D	S
P	O	U	T	S		Y	O	U		P	O	S	I	T
E	L	M			R	A	N		B	R	A	S	S	Y
		A	S	K	E	W		P	O	E	T			
C	A	N	K	E	E	P	C	R	O	S	S	I	N	G
A	D	R	I	A	N		R	O	S	A		M	O	O
P	L	A	N		A	B	E	T		G	R	A	T	E
R	I	C	K		C	A	M	E		E	A	G	E	R
A	B	E	S		T	H	E	M		S	H	E	D	S

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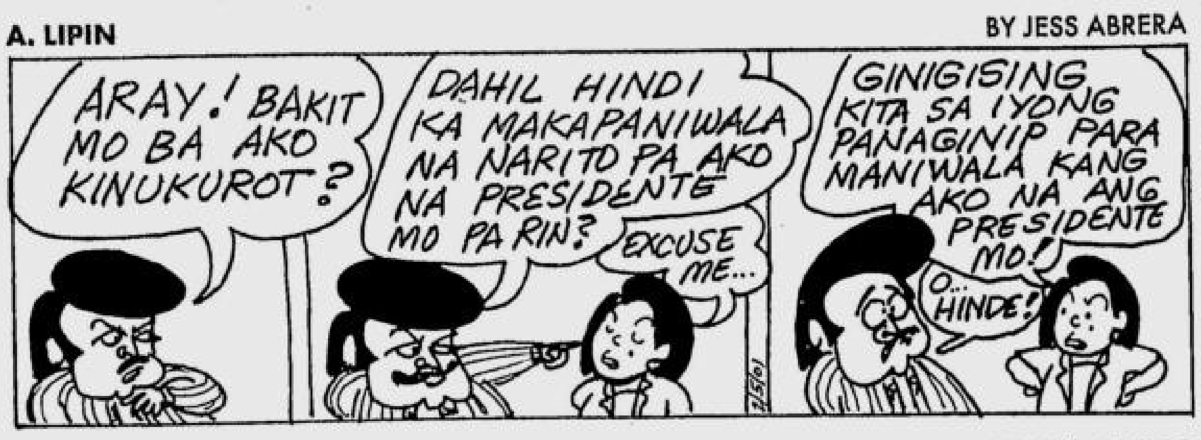
12/22/00

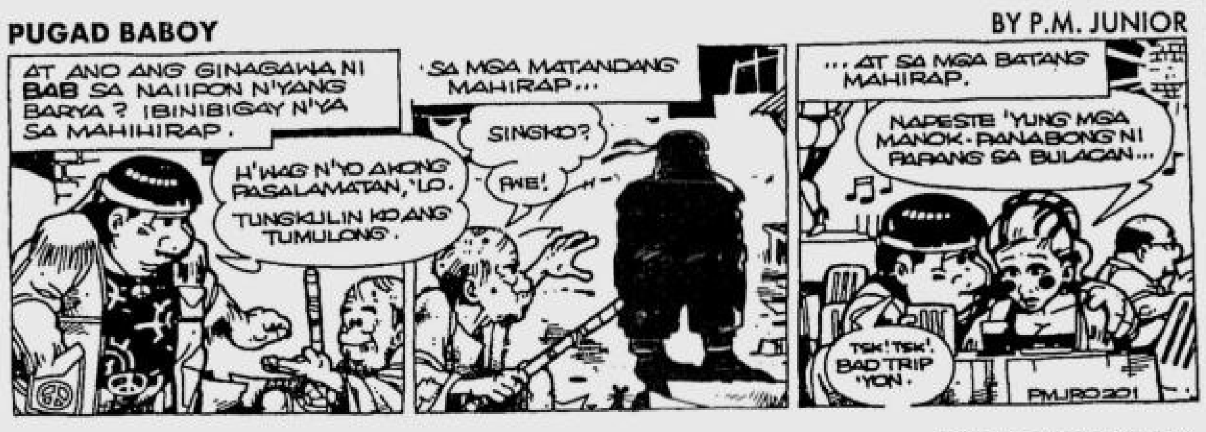
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ARAY! BAKIT MO BA AKO KINUKUROT?
DAHIL HINDI KA MAKAPANIWALA NA NARITO PA AKO NA PRESIDENTE MO PA RIN?
EXCUSE ME...
GINIGISING KITA SA IYONG PANAGINIP PARA MANIWALA KANG AKO NA ANG PRESIDENTE MO!
O... HINDE!
2/5/01

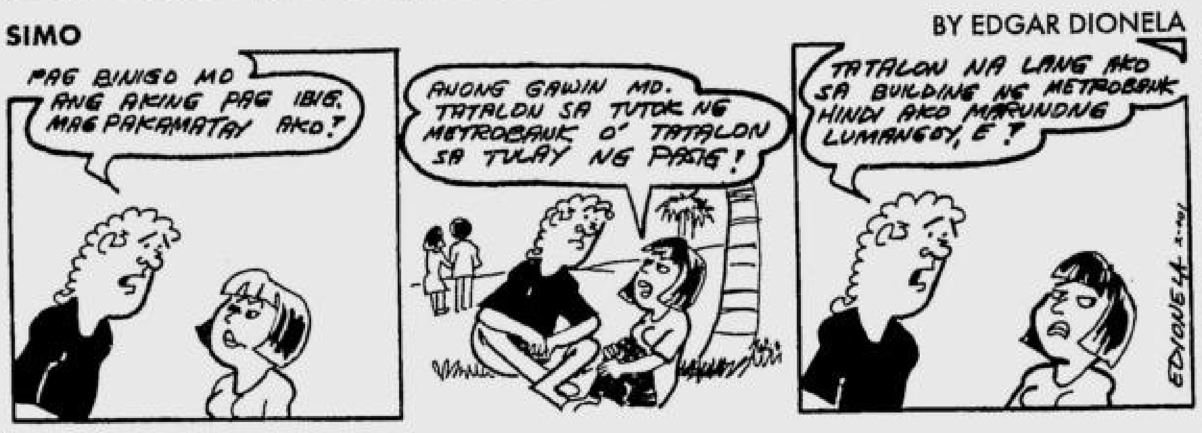
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


AT ANO ANG GINAGAWA NI BAB SA NAIIPON N'YANG BARYA? IBINIBIGAY N'YA SA MAHIHIRAP.
H'WAG N'YO AKONG PASALAMATAN, 'LO. TUNGKULIN KO ANG TUMULONG.
SA MGA MATANDANG MAHIRAP...
SINGKO?
PAB!
...AT SA MGA BATANG MAHIRAP.
NAPESTE 'YUNG MGA MANOK-PANABONG NI PAPANG SA BULACAN...
TSK! TSK! BAD TRIP 'YON.
PMJRO201

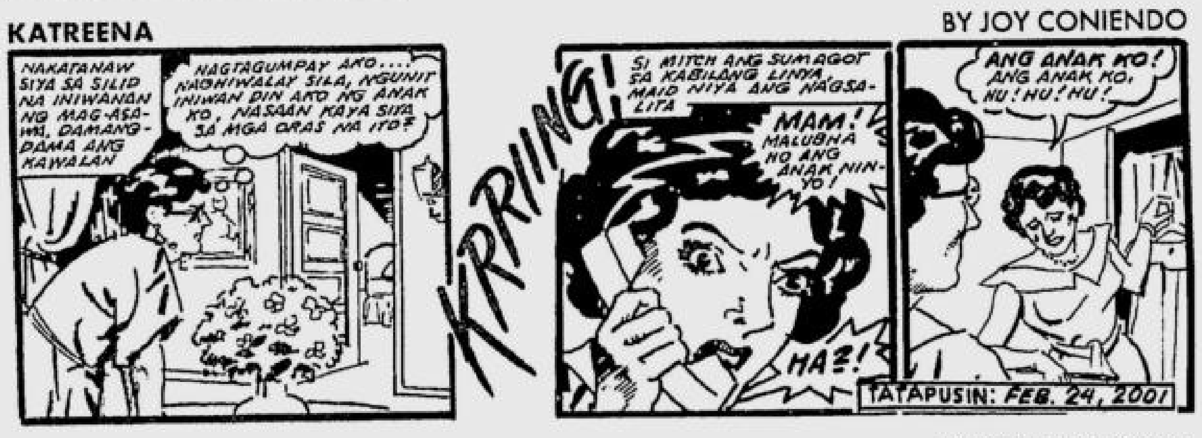
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


PAG BINIGO MO ANG AKING PAG IBIG, MAG PAKAMATAY AKO!
ANONG GAWIN MO. TATALON SA TUTOK NG METROBANK O' TATALON SA TULAY NG PASIG!
TATALON NA LANG AKO SA BUILDING NG METROBANK HINDI AKO MARUNONG LUMANGOY, E?
EDIONELA

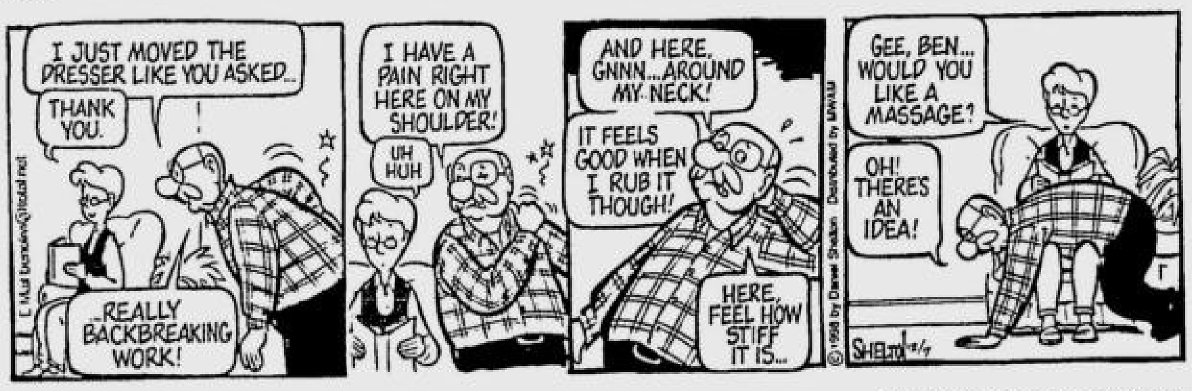
KATREENA

BY JOY CONIENDO


NAKATANAW SIYA SA SILID NA INIWANAN NG MAG-ASAWA, DAMANG-DAMA ANG KAWALAN
NAGTAGUMPAY AKO.... NAGHIWALAY SILA, NGUNIT INIWAN DIN AKO NG ANAK KO, NASAAN KAYA SIYA SA MGA ORAS NA ITO?
KRRIING!
SI MITCH ANG SUMAGOT SA KABILANG LINYA, MAID NIYA ANG NAGSALITA
MAM! MALUBHA HO ANG ANAK NINYO!
HA?!
ANG ANAK KO! ANG ANAK KO, HU! HU! HU!
TATAPUSIN: FEB. 24, 2001

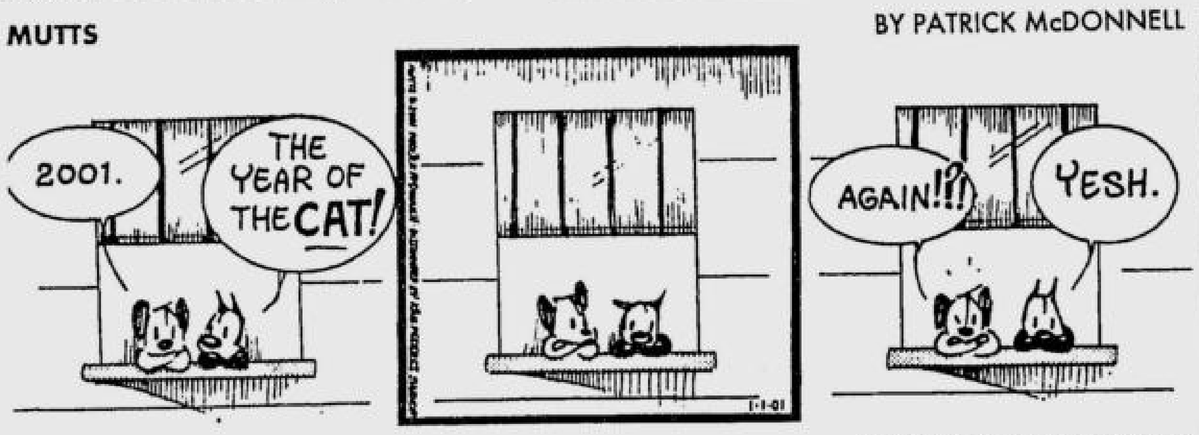
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I JUST MOVED THE DRESSER LIKE YOU ASKED...
THANK YOU.
...REALLY BACKBREAKING WORK!
I HAVE A PAIN RIGHT HERE ON MY SHOULDER!
UH HUH
AND HERE, GNNN...AROUND MY NECK!
IT FEELS GOOD WHEN I RUB IT THOUGH!
HERE, FEEL HOW STIFF IT IS...
GEE, BEN... WOULD YOU LIKE A MASSAGE?
OH! THERES AN IDEA!
SHELTON

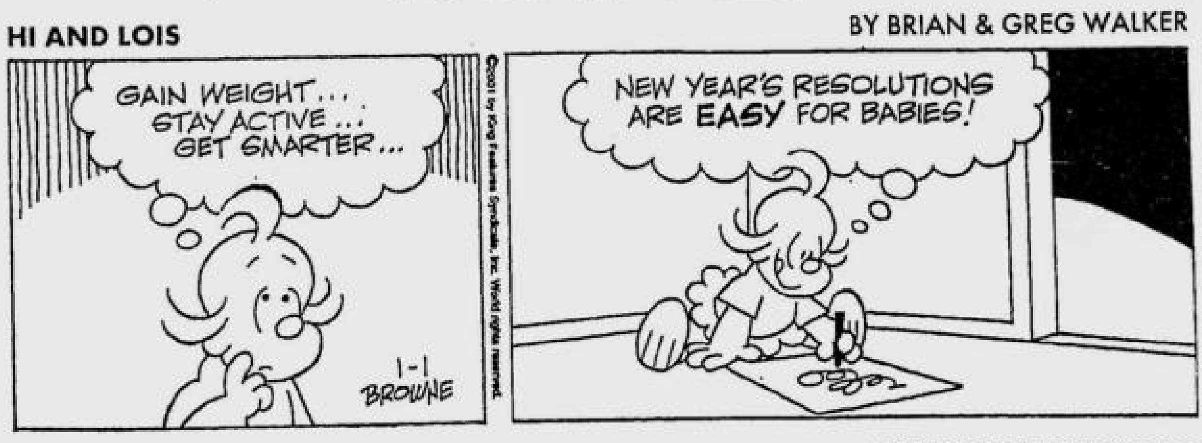
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


2001.
THE YEAR OF THE CAT!
AGAIN!?!
YESH.
1-1-01

HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER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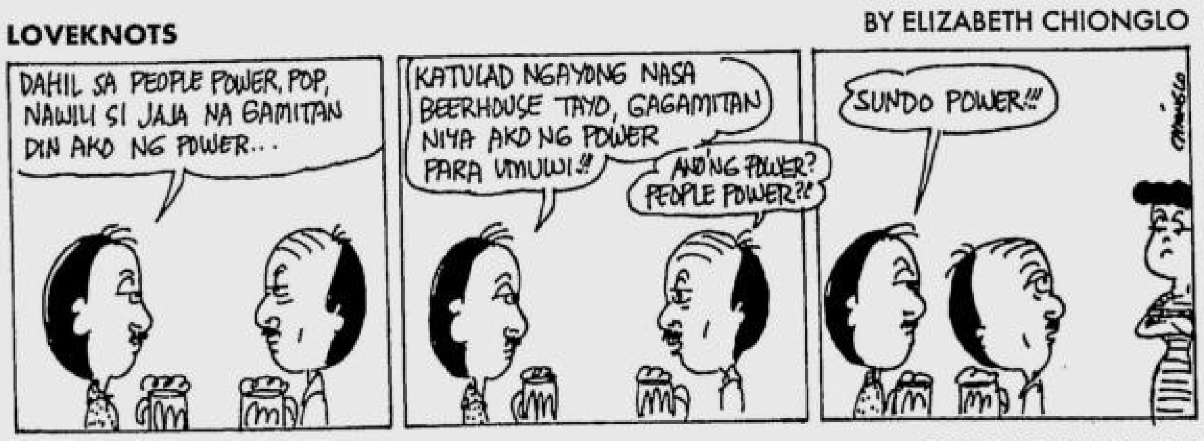
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS ARE EASY FOR BABIES!

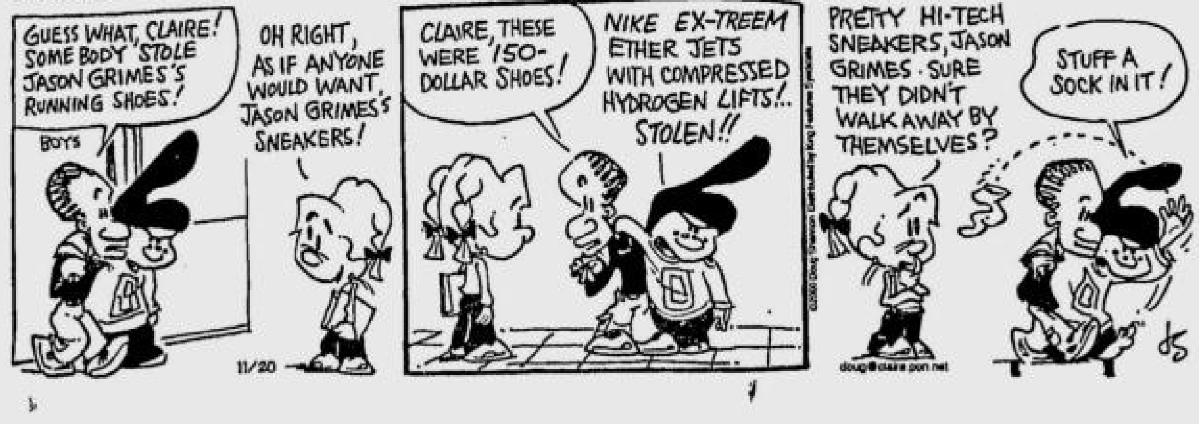
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DAHIL SA PEOPLE POWER, POP, NAWILI SI JAJA NA GAMITAN DIN AKO NG POWER...
KATULAD NGAYONG NASA BEERHOUSE TAYO, GAGAMITAN NIYA AKO NG POWER PARA UMUWI!!
ANO'NG POWER? PEOPLE POWER?!?
SUNDO POWER!!!
CHIONGLO

CLAIRE

BY DOUG SHANNON


GUESS WHAT, CLAIRE! SOME BODY STOLE JASON GRIMES'S RUNNING SHOES!
BOYS
OH RIGHT, AS IF ANYONE WOULD WANT JASON GRIMES'S SNEAKERS!
CLAIRE, THESE WERE 150-DOLLAR SHOES!
NIKE EX-TREEM ETHER JETS WITH COMPRESSED HYDROGEN LIFTS!.. STOLEN!!
PRETTY HI-TECH SNEAKERS, JASON GRIMES. SURE THEY DIDN'T WALK AWAY BY THEMSELVES?
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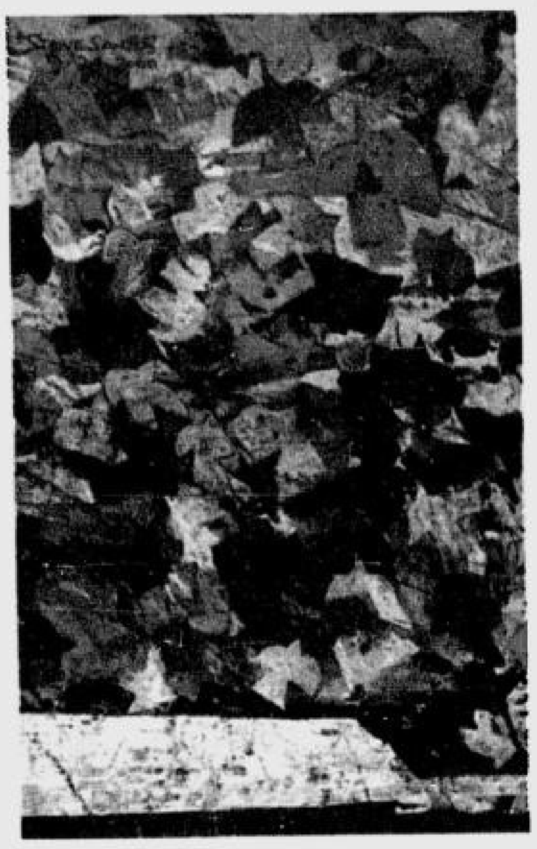
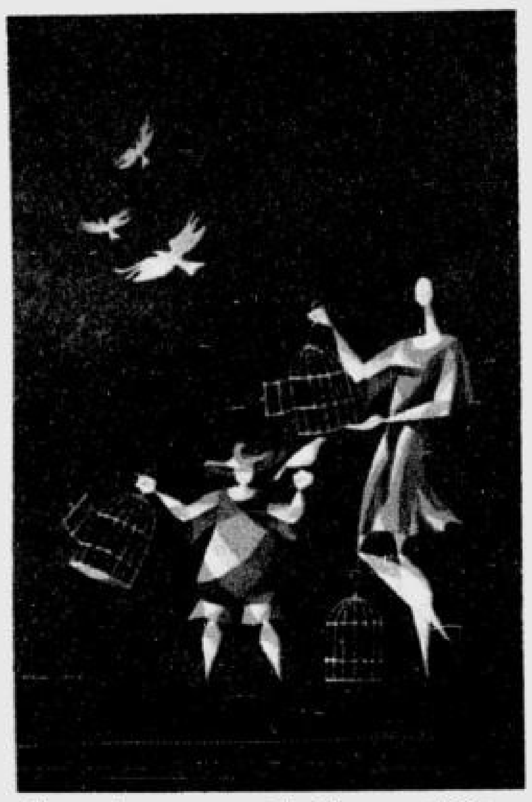
11/20
doug@claire.pon.net



Stevesantos at West Gallery

STEVESANTOS exhibits his recent works at the West Gallery (SM Megamall) on Feb. 8-20. The show focuses on outdoors given a semi-abstract feel. Flora is lushly presented in little dabs of paint. Birds are marked by ballpoint pen and charcoal. The strokes are swift yet purposeful. The show underscores the artist's identity of mixing realism and abstraction. Above is "Flight," acrylic on board. Call 634-1284.

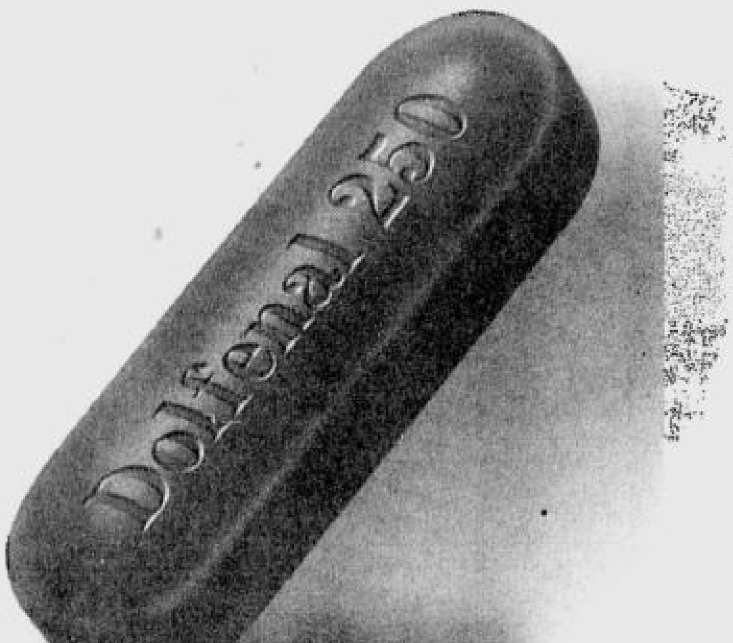


Sta. Ana at Gallery 139

ERNIE Sta. Ana is holding his latest exhibit at Gallery 139 (Glorietta IV, Ayala Center, Makati City) until Feb. 15. Using "soft geometric cubism" (his term to describe his linear yet fluid forms), he has come up with some 50 canvases showing human figures engaged in fun and family-oriented activities. Rich, rainbow colors enhance the optimistic mood of the works. Above is "Return to Nature," acrylic on canvass.

GMA Network stars hold art show

GMA Network Inc. will be holding its first art exhibit dubbed "ArtGap" on Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m. The exhibit features the artistic works of GMA talents such as Francis Magalona, Michael V., Bing Loyzaga, Celso Divino, Carmen Jimenez-Ong, and others. The show is also a fund-raising activity for GMA Foundation. Call 426-3925.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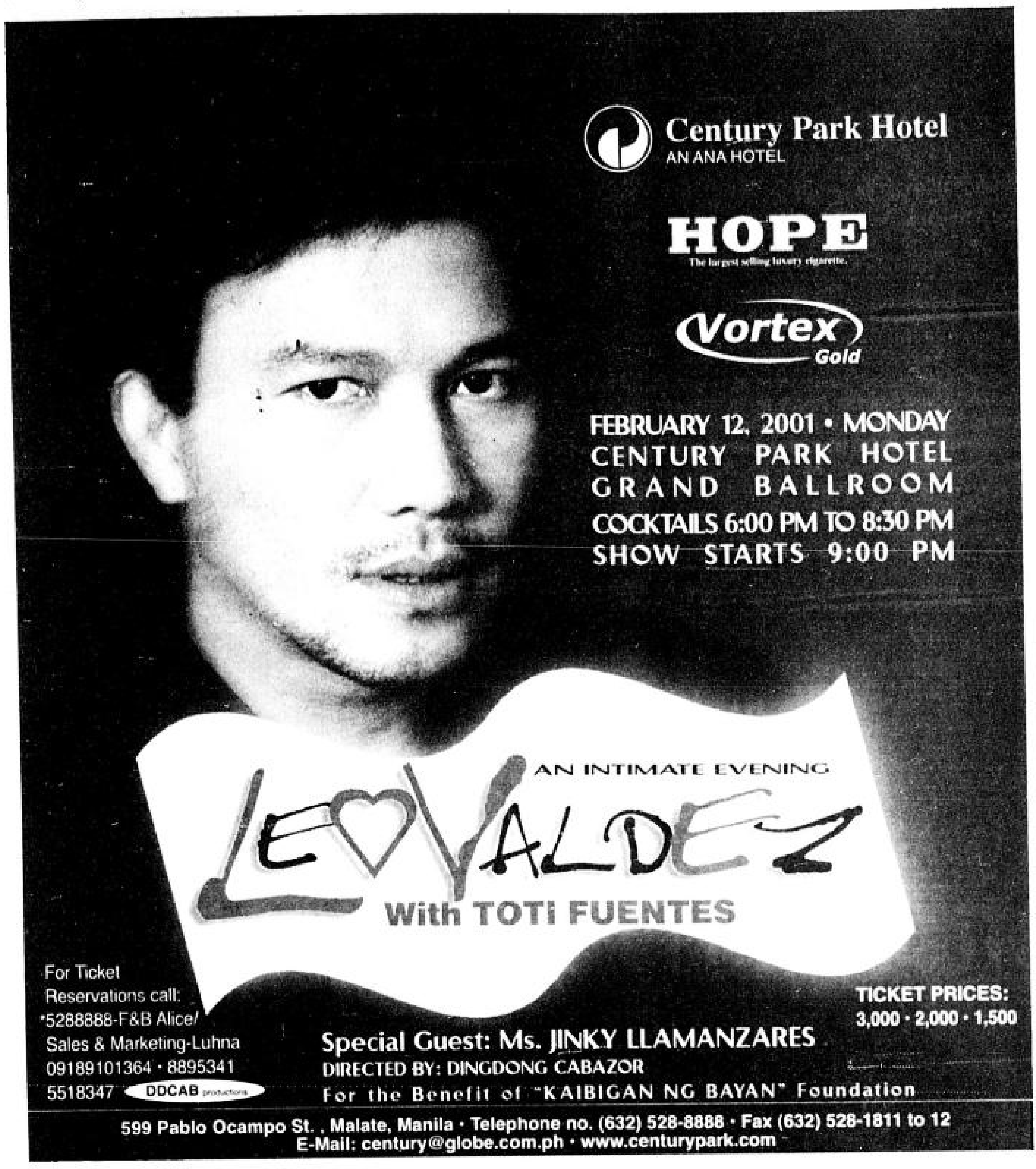
Tres Acidos at Art Center

TRES Acidos Inc. mounts an exhibit entitled "Mad Love" on Feb. 9-28 at the Art Center, SM Megamall. Featured are new works by Andres Barrioquinto, Dr. Joel C. Mendez and Ronald Ventura. "Mad Love" is the group's third collaboration, with images full of the passion, peril and power of love. The artists, who are also part of the Philippine Drawing Society, express their sentiments through their twin fortes of drawing and painting. Call 371-8886 to 87.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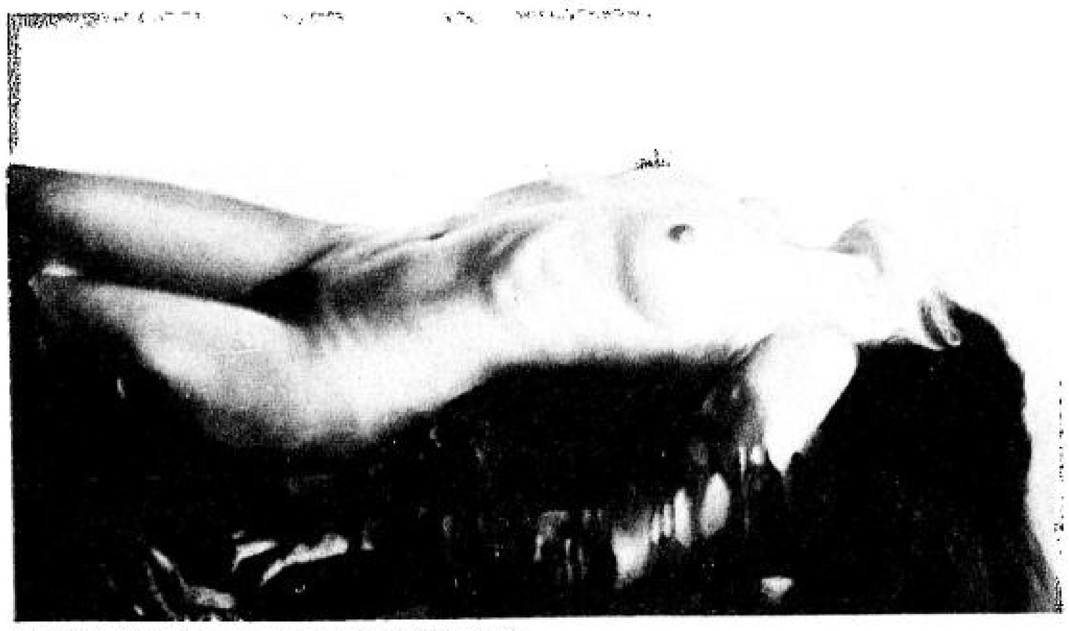
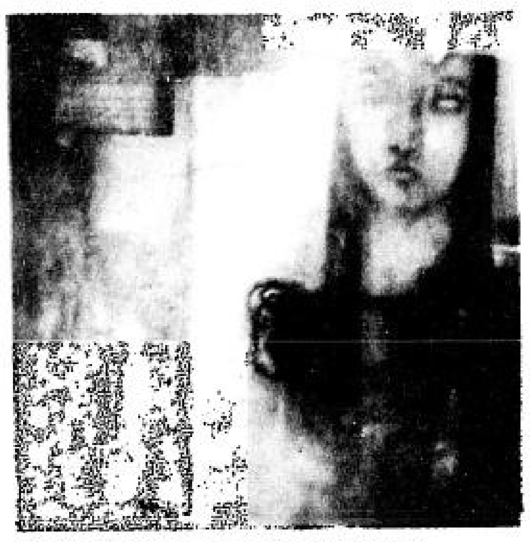
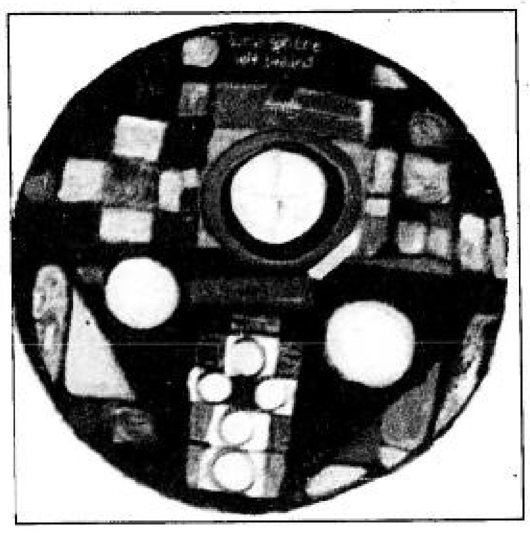

"UNTITLED," oil on canvas, by Ronald Ventura


"BELOVED," oil on canvas, by Andres Barrioquinto


"RUN AROUND SERIES," oil on canvas, by Dr. Joel Mendez

RONALD Ventura, Dr. Joel Mendez and Andres Barrioquinto

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LIFESTYLE

Arts/Design

NICK Joaquin
PHOTOS: JOHNNY VILLENA

'No collaboration with evil' is the rallying cry of Nick Joaquin's new play

By Cora Llamas

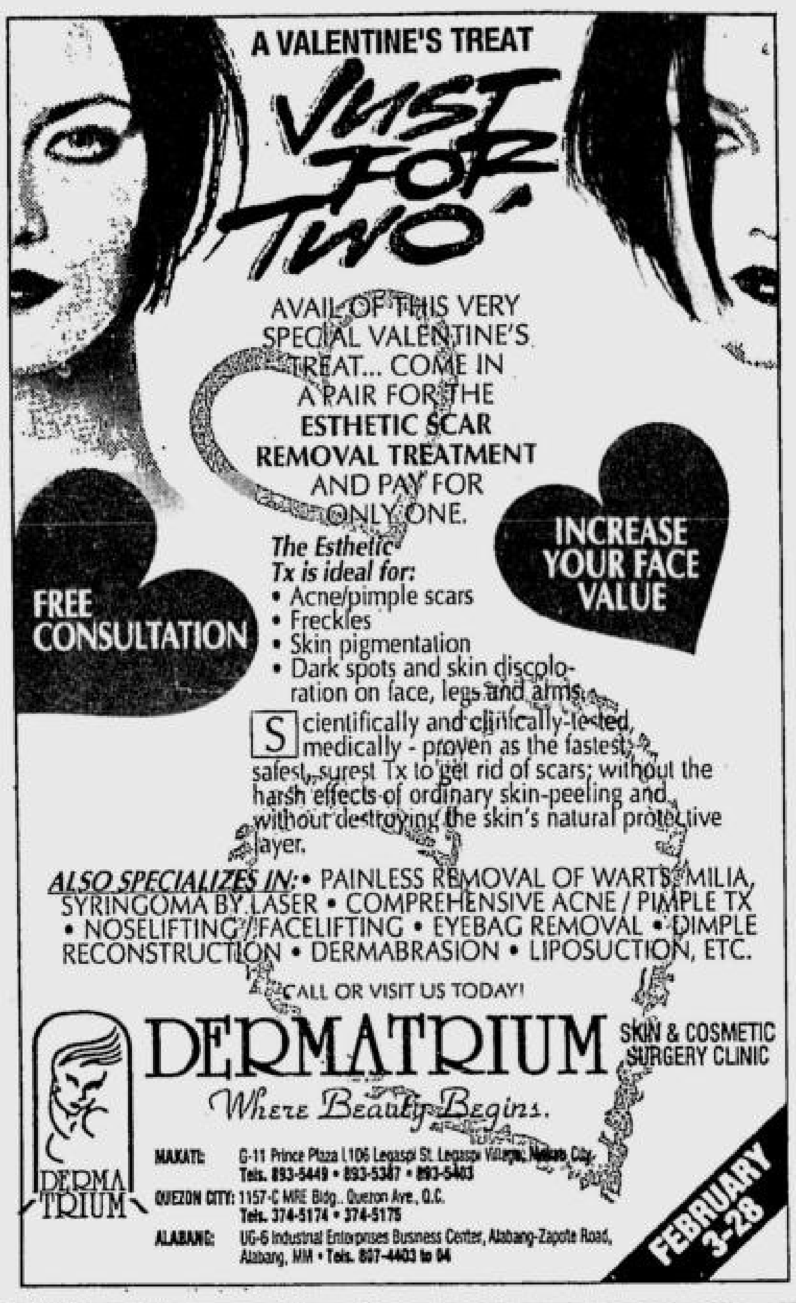
"YOU do not collaborate with evil."

It is a lesson learned at such a high price and Filipinos should have taken it to heart in 1986 after throwing off a 20-year dictatorship. Now, 14 years later, after the people have deposed another president, there are calls from certain quarters to "forgive and forget that healing might take place."

No less than Nick Joaquin, National Artist for Literature, disagrees. During the Marcos years, immediately after the declaration of martial law, many good, law-abiding citizens chose to compromise their values, hoping to reform the system from within. It was a fatal mistake. Like greedy, insatiable leeches, the bad guys kept grabbing and grabbing for more until nothing was left.

This at least is the message of "Pinoy Agonistes," Nick Joaquin's first play since "Camino Real" more than a decade ago. Produced by Tanghalang Pilipino [TP] and directed by Nonon

'NO/ p.F4



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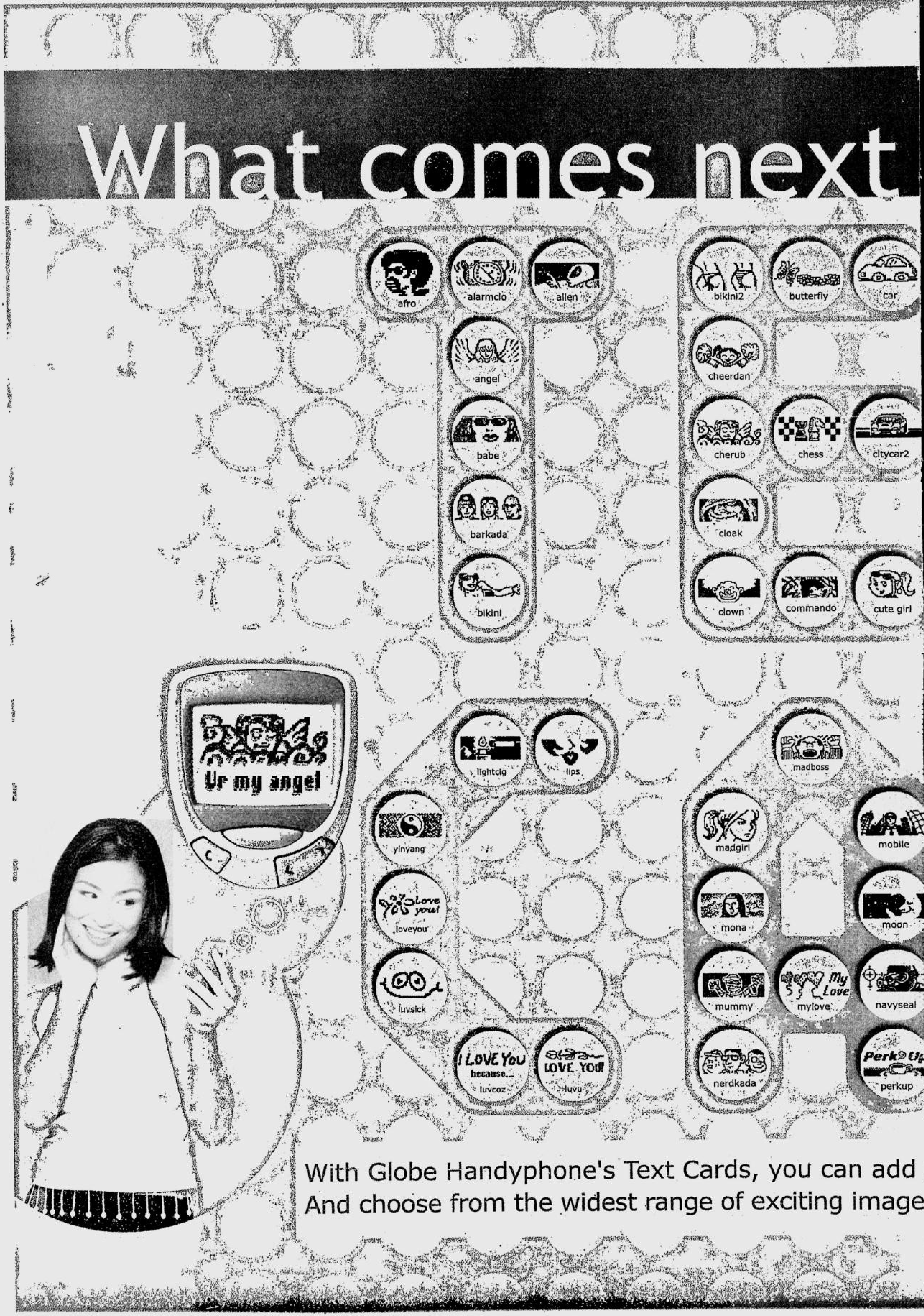
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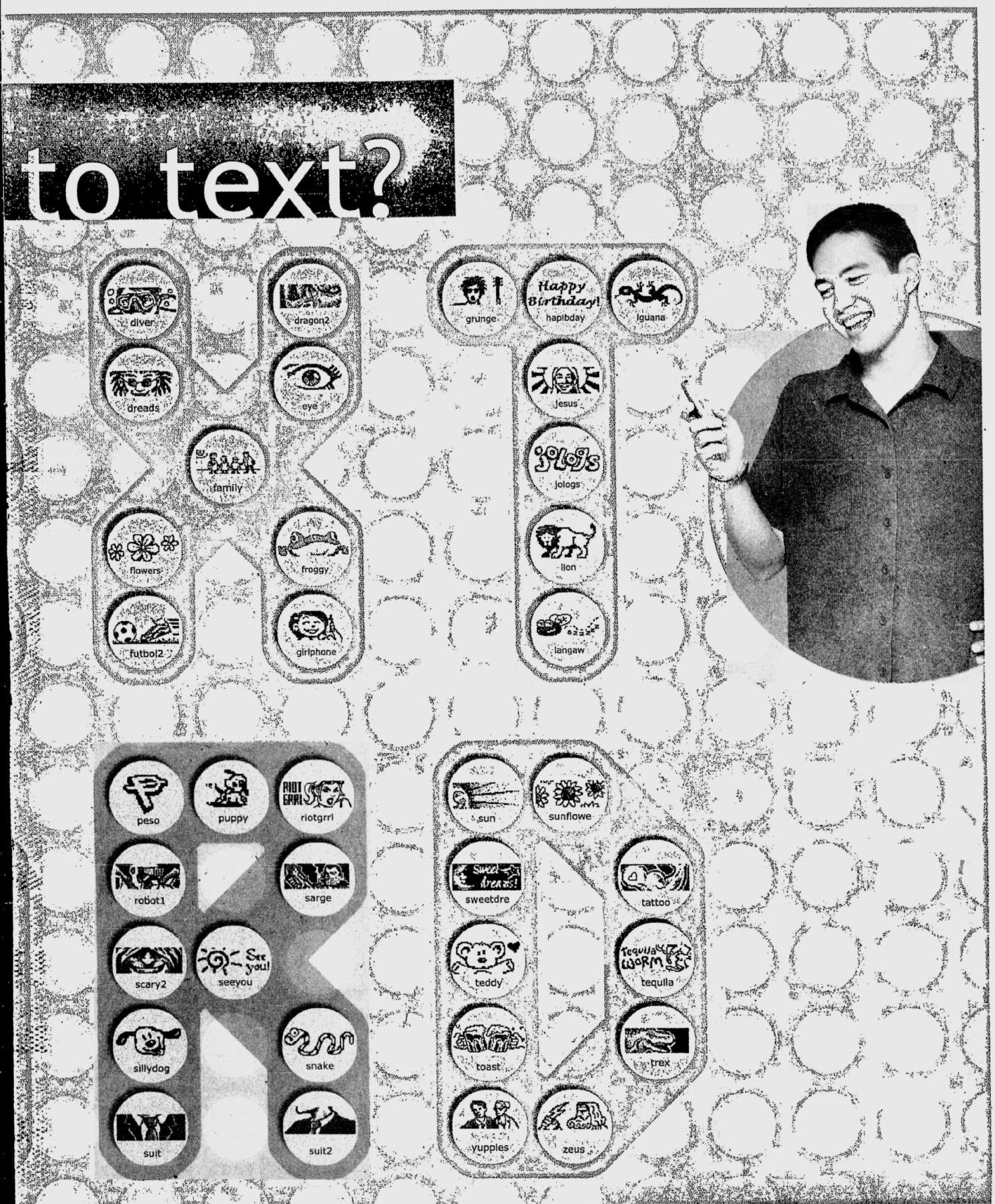

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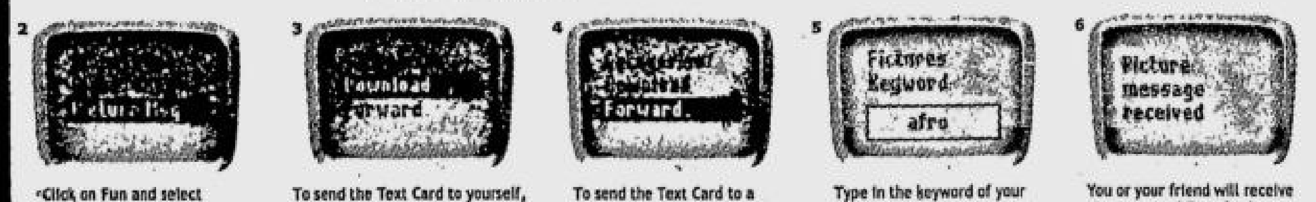

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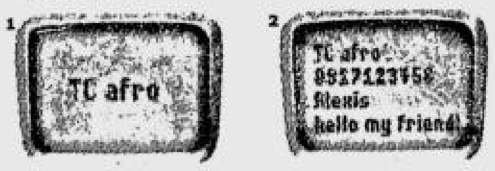

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FRESH FROM RUSSIA

Prima ballerina Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, artistic director Eric Cruz, principal danseur Osias Barroso and the rest of Ballet Manila arrive from a two-week tour of key Russian cities such as St. Petersburg. The company performed ethnic pieces and a Beatles-inspired number titled "Ouch" to eager Russian audiences. Lisa is met at the NAIA by husband Fred Elizalde, stepdaughter Sasha and daughter Missy.

ROGER MARGALLO

'No collaboration with evil' . . .

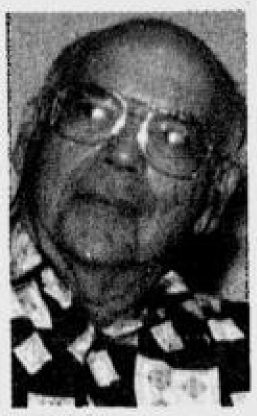
(From page F1)

Padilla, the dramatic piece could not have been mounted at a more auspicious time, following right on the heels of the triumphant Edsa 2."Pinoy Agonistes" is a heart-rending exposé, occasionally lightened by Joaquin's ironic sense of humor, of the catalyst of events that forced a nation to reach for its collective conscience and bring about the Edsa Revolution of 1986.

Two figures struggle at the heart of the drama: car magnate Leo Galang (Subas Herrero alternates with Boboy Garovillo) and his wife, publisher-editor Isabel (Josephine Roces-Chavez). Galang has just invented the first Filipino car. Just as he and his family are about to enjoy the fruits of his labor, in comes a crony to take over his company and his patents. His wife's magazine also is forced to toe the line of political correctness or face closure.

Rather than buckle down to the pressures, Galang destroys his designs and technical plans. Just as he and his family are about to flee to America, news breaks out that Ninoy Aquino is coming home. The ex-magnate shelves his plans for immigration and spearheads anti-Marcos rallies.

EUGENIA Apostol



SUBAS Herrero

MITCH Valdez

Joaquin said that he drew his protagonists from real people. Isabel was inspired by publisher Eggie Apostol, one of the few outspoken enemies of the regime at a time when it was dangerous to do so. Apostol founded the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER (PDI) and now heads the hard-hitting Pinoy Times. Leo's model, a car inventor named Domingo Guevarra, was not as fortunate. The forced buy-out of his company by a Marcos buddy pushed him out, stopping him from building the first Filipino automobile, which would have earned prestige and profit not just for himself, but for his country. Guevarra was said to have died a year ago.

"Even if you collaborate with evil to protect your property and your life,". Joaquin thundered, "you will end up losing [both.]"

The Grand Old Man of Philippine Letters is still feisty as ever, occasionally roaring out his infrequent answers with signature beer in hand, in the "Pinoy Agonistes" presscon some days ago.

"Edsa 1 was and is an important time in our history. Those professing disillusionment about it are fooling themselves," he said with his characteristic bluntness. "So I decided to write a play to invoke the atmosphere that was before Edsa 1. And what propelled us [toward it]."

Mitch Valdez, who plays the kooky but streetwise maid Emperatriz, agreed. "Those who are too young to remember cannot realize the fear of martial law. Until now, some people are so misguided, saying that at least during that era, you had clean streets and *guminginhawa ang mga negosyo.* [They also say] that democracy brings about deterioration. That is not true. This play proves what it was like to be in the press then, and how it was like to live in fear 24 hours a day for 25 years."

The play's artistic team is one with the playwright's vision. In a stroke of "serendipitous" casting, the cast is made up of artists who, at one point or another, have been openly critical of the Marcos and/or Estrada administrations. Most of them immediately flocked to Edsa straight from the pictorial in full makeup that fateful Tuesday night when the 11 senators voted to suppress the truth.

Herrero could not forget what he felt at Edsa the few days that followed: "The anger and disgust of the people. There was much [of that]. We have been fortunate that we have been given another chance. Let's not lose that chance and stumble once again. In the first Edsa, there was much talk about reconciliation. But reconciliation always entailed justice."

"—And repentance," Valdez chimed in.

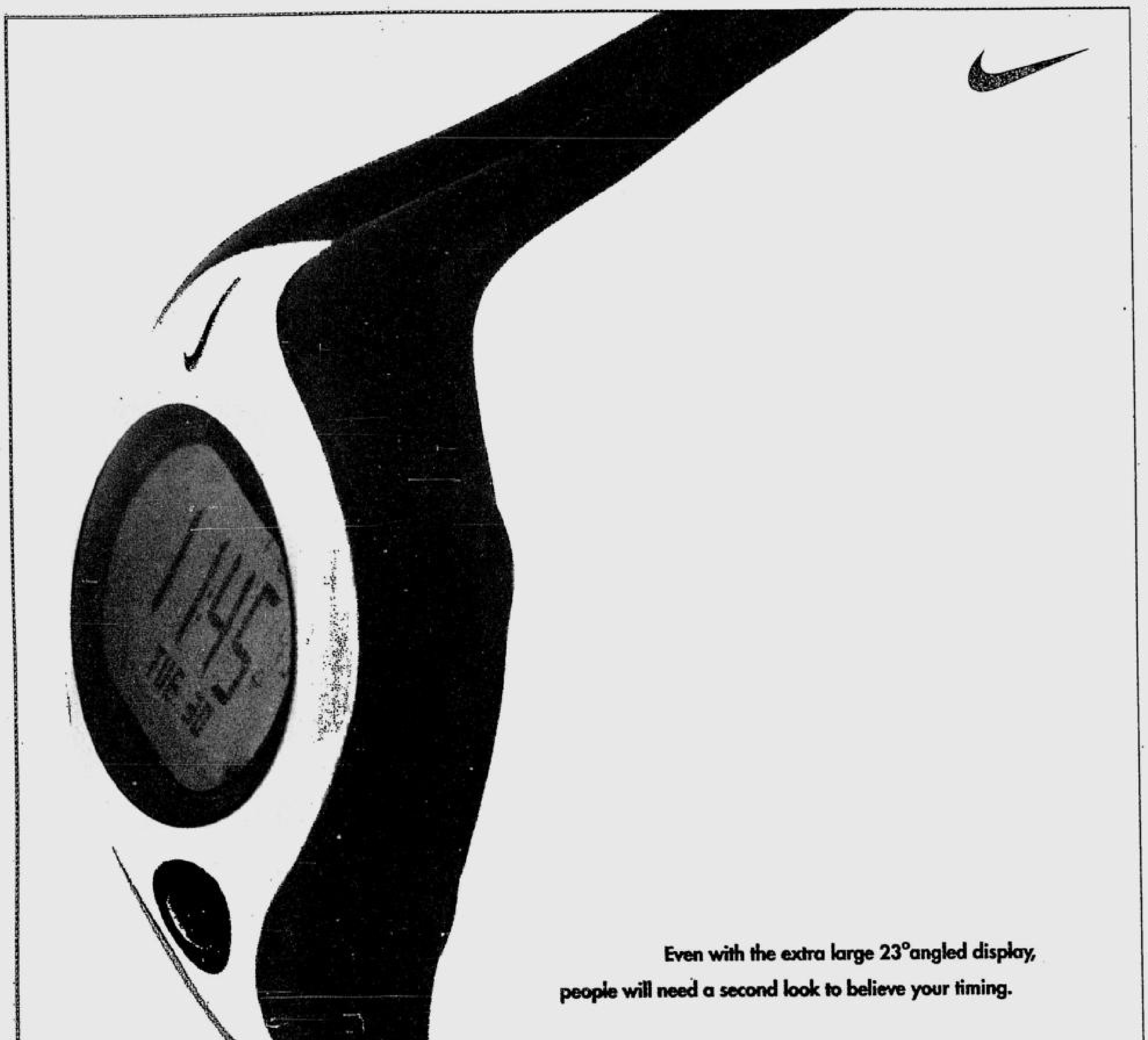
Garovillo followed suit, "*Ikulong ang dapat ikulong.*"

When martial law was declared, Garovillo was a twentysomething kid coming home from a party. The only thing that the checkpoints and military patrols meant to him at that time were lousy curfews that put an end to late nights out. But, like the character that he played, the realization of the truth dawned, slowly and painfully. "This dictatorship affected everybody—the poor, the businessmen, the industry, the economy."

What's important now though is the future which lies in the hands of a very young, very active, tech-savvy generation. "Eighty-five percent of the people who were in Edsa 2 were under 30 years old," Garovillo pointed out. "It's the best time to review history again and pass it on to the younger people. *Para hindi na makalimutan. Habang malalim pa ang tama sa tao.*"

You can count on one institution to do just that. Nick Joaquin's "Pinoy Agonistes" was commissioned by the Foundation for Worldwide People Power. Organized by Apostol after her resignation from the PDI in 1994, the Foundation aims to make the truths of the peaceful popular uprising burning in the hearts of the people and not make them "forget martial law, Marcos and Edsa."

"Pinoy Agonistes" opens on Feb. 16 at the Onstage Greenbelt Theater, Greenbelt Cinema, Makati City. It moves to the CCP Tanghalang Tolentino on Feb. 23.



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SOPRANO GERODIAS AND TENOR DE LA CRUZ IN CONCERT

THE NATIONAL Philharmonic Society will present soprano Rachelle Gerodias and tenor Lemuel de la Cruz on Feb. 8 at the Francisco Santiago Hall of the Equitable PCI Bank Tower I on Makati Avenue. Both faculty members of the UST Conservatory of Music, Gerodias and De la Cruz have recorded with the London, Royal and Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestras. Call 815-2651, 817-2601 and 810-7988.